CHARLES LEE

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The Romance of

GREAT BOOKS AND THEIR AUTHORS

WALT WHITMAN'S BIRTHPLACE, WEST HILLS, LONG ISLAND

From a hitherto unpublished photograph, probably the earliest extant (about 1888*), in the collection of Alfred F. Goldsmith. The house still stands, but the surroundings are much altered*

THE ROMANCE OF

GREAT BOOKS

AND THEIR AUTHORS

By

JOHN T. WINTERICH

Talent alone cannot make a writer.
There must be a man behind the book.
EMERSON : *Representative Men*

HALCYON HOUSE : NEW YORK

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GREENBERG, PUBLISHER, INC.

First published under the title
BOOKS AND THE MAN

HALCYON HOUSE *editions are published and distributed by Blue Ribbon Books, Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York City.*

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY THE CORNWALL PRESS, INC., CORNWALL, N. Y.

To the Memory of

EDWARD ARMSTRONG WINTERICH

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is pleasant to make public acknowledgment of the friendly counsel and practical assistance which the writer received in the preparation of this book from such competent authorities as the following representatives of the rare-booktrade in New York City: Ralph Allan of the Phoenix Bookshop; James H. and Marston E. Drake of James F. Drake, Incorporated; Alfred F. Goldsmith; E. Byrne Hackett of the Brick Row Bookshop; Alwin J. Scheuer; Frank Walters, and Edgar H. Wells of Edgar H. Wells & Co. The writer's thanks are also due to Mrs. Edward Turnbull, to the cataloging departments of the American Art Association and the Anderson Galleries of New York, and to T. C. Dunlop, Honorary Secretary to the Trustees of the Burns Cottage at Alloway, Scotland. Harper & Brothers of New York and Macmillan & Co. of London kindly permitted the use of illustrations (in the Du Maurier and Lewis Carroll papers respectively) which would not otherwise have been available. Acknowledgment of specific authorities cited is made with the citations, but a special word is due the invaluable help supplied throughout by *American Book-Prices Current.* Special thanks are due William MacLean of New York for general supervision of the illustrations. The writer is above all grateful to Frederic Melcher and Mildred Smith of the *Publishers' Weekly,* in the pages of which these papers originally appeared.

J. T. W.

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The Romance of

GREAT BOOKS AND THEIR AUTHORS

BOOKS AND THE MAN

WALT WHITMAN AND *LEAVES OF GRASS*

I

CRANBERRY STREET in Brooklyn (neighbored by Orange and Pineapple) has its unprepossessing terminus at Fulton in the shadow of the elevated railroad. The region is an admirable instance of the commercial atrophy that overtakes any quarter of a large city that is just off several beaten paths. The bustle of business is all about, but lower Fulton Street contributes little of that bustle, and Cranberry less. Almost at the corner itself the girders of the elevated spread into a broad fan of steel that is the beginning of the superstructure of Brooklyn Bridge, but the way to the bridge does not lie here. A few yards to the east stands Plymouth Congregational, most famous church in this City of Churches, and, not far beyond, Brooklyn Heights offers the finest obtainable prospect of the lower Manhattan skyline, particularly a few minutes before five on a clear day in late December. Fulton Street, having sowed its solitary Cranberry, struggles out of this dingy backwash to attain respectability at Borough Hall, a quarter of a mile away, and thence plethoric prosperity as the great shopping thoroughfare of the largest borough of the metropolis—larger by a shade than Man-

hattan, which the true Brooklynite still calls New York.

Prosperity and respectability were once the portion of the corner of Cranberry and Fulton, but it is not so today. True, the region hardly bespeaks poverty or disrepute; certainly those instances of its activity which attract the casual eye connote no such attributes. On the south corner is a restaurant that has progressed a degree from the side-arm stage; the north corner is occupied by an Italian barber shop. Obviously some concern is felt here for both the outer and the inner man.

Six years before the flag was shot down at Sumter the vicinity of Cranberry and Fulton must have been far more inviting. There was no elevated railroad to shut light out and noise in. There was no Brooklyn Bridge—one went to New York by ferry, as one who finds adventure in novelty may still do. A young minister named Henry Ward Beecher had occupied the pulpit of Plymouth Church for seven years and was to continue his pastorate there for the thirty-three of life that remained to him.

In the building on the north corner of Cranberry and Fulton was the printing office of Andrew and James Rome. The contemporary city directory was sufficiently uncertain about the ranking Rome to enter him both by his correct designation and also as Andrew H. Roome, recalling Cassius's ironic pun. The quarters were small, but they were large enough to enable the Romes, who evidently were an accommodating crowd, to permit a slow-moving, bearded six-footer of thirty-six—a friend of theirs called Walter Whitman, who lived up on Ryerson Street—to stand before a case with a stick in his hand and fuss with the types. This Whitman, however, was

no curious idler who merely wanted to see the wheels of a print shop go round. A jack of many trades, he was as much a printer as he was anything else. In these early summer days of 1855 he was getting ready to publish a book of poems—poems not wholly composed in the distilled quiet of solitude, but often in such a shoulder-rubbing workshop as a Broadway omnibus or his beloved Fulton ferry. And, since he had little money and nothing much to do, and knew type (the Romes lent a hand now and then between jobs), why shouldn't he handle his own copy?

At home Whitman was called Walt to distinguish him from his father, who had been Walter before him. He had been born at West Hills, thirty miles back on Long Island, some three months after the Floridas had been ceded to the United States, and while the struggle that produced the Missouri Compromise was being waged in Congress, to terminate in the fond belief that the slavery puzzle was out of politics forever. The family soon moved into Brooklyn, where Walt had a little rudimentary schooling before he became a lawyer's errand boy, and then a handy man in a doctor's office. Soon he turned printer, and subsequently (after an interval of country school teaching) newspaper editor. He reached his apex in this activity early in 1846 with his appointment to the editorship of the *Brooklyn Eagle,* in which situation he was blessed, by his own admission, with "a good owner, good pay, and easy work and hours." This Elysium was too good to last; the good owner (his name was Isaac Van Anden) found matter for dispute in January, 1848; there were "rows with the boss and 'the party' and I lost my place." There was a casual meeting

with the editor of the New Orleans *Crescent* in the lobby of the Broadway Theatre; "after fifteen minutes' talk (and a drink) we made a formal bargain." The Southern invasion lasted only a few months. Home again, Whitman tried editing, then lecturing, then helping his father build and sell houses in what was then nethermost Brooklyn. This construction venture was evidently no very hectic enterprise, and must have subsided into a coma half way through 1855, when Whitman took the copy for his book of poems to the Rome brothers' plant.

This was not, in all strictness, his first excursion into literature. Thirteen years earlier he had produced *Franklin Evans; or The Inebriate. A Tale of the Times*—produced it, clearly, to order. Of this attempt "to aid the great work of Reform, and rescue Young Men from the demon of Intemperance," issued as a paper-bound supplement to the *New World*, some twenty-five thousand copies are reputed to have been sold. Whitman, as a consistent patron of Pfaff's Restaurant on Broadway, where he enjoyed the pleasant reputation of being "never tipsy and never broke," must have written the thing with his tongue in his cheek and all his eyes on the two hundred dollars or so which its composition earned for him. In after days he was invariably delighted to have the conversation shift from a discussion of his first and only novel. The Dickens influence in *Franklin Evans* has been remarked; it is interesting to note that the special *New World* supplement which immediately preceded the Whitman production (both were published in November, 1842) was Dickens's *American Notes*, of which the periodical's proprietors claimed to have disposed of fifty thousand copies within a month of its appearance.

WALT WHITMAN'S BROOKLYN, AS SEEN FROM NEW YORK

In the left foreground is the New York terminal of the Fulton Ferry, on whose boats some of Leaves of Grass *was composed. From the lithograph by Whitefield* (1846)

II

The new book on which Whitman was working in the Rome shop in the middle of 1855 was called *Leaves of Grass*, and it was issued in July. Physically as well as spiritually it was a remarkable and sturdy product. It contained only ninety-five pages, ten of them devoted to a preface set two columns to the page which, by pure word-count, was longer than all of the text. The other eighty-five pages were given over to twelve untitled poems (strictly speaking, each separate poem was entitled *Leaves of Grass*) set in full measure, the width of the page necessitating an unusually small proportion of broken lines. The typographic effect was striking and majestic; its dignified austerity was in perfect harmony with the opening lines:

> I celebrate myself,
> And what I assume you shall assume,
> For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

For all the book's thinness—covers included, it was barely a half-inch thick—it was bound with a substantiality that would have supported a ponderous compilation of court records. The covers were of dark green cloth over stout boards, measuring eleven and three-eighths by eight inches. On front and back covers alike was an ornate conventional design embodying leaves of anything but grass, surrounded by a triple-rule gold border. Just above the center were the words *Leaves of Grass* in gold, the letters in a novel rustic pattern, and each supplied with a fringe of trailing roots. On the backstrip appeared *Leaves of Grass* in gold, and five ornamental leaf groups

in gold outline. All three edges were trimmed and gilt. The end leaves were a heavy marbled paper. It was not a cheaply made book.

The inventory of this lavishness merits making for the reason that it was not in evidence in all copies of the first edition. In some the title was stamped in gold on the front cover only, the gold rules were omitted both front and back, and the gold outlines from the leaves on the backstrip; all three edges were plain, the end papers were a common yellow. The inference is obvious: not all the copies were bound at once; when it became apparent that the enterprise was not to be a commercial success, the author-printer, his aspirations now tempered by conservatism, had the remaining copies bound with greater economy. It was not the era of "angels"; there was no one to play Maecenas to Walt Whitman's Horace save Walt Whitman himself.

For Whitman had little enough to throw into the venture save unquenchable faith and the ability to set type and pull a proof. By setting the type he saved the entire cost of composition; somehow he managed to secure paper and a design for his cover and get his binding done —the names of the actual benefactors are unknown, and will doubtless forever remain so. Quite possibly as good a mixer as himself could get all this service for next to nothing or at cost. But the whole business was a shoestring enterprise, and the strands of the shoestring were good will.

Whether or not *Leaves of Grass* was published anonymously is an excellent topic for discussion among those who shudder at a split infinitive and rejoice at a split hair. True, no author's name adorned the title page or

Leaves

of

Grass.

Brooklyn, New York:
1855.

TITLE PAGE OF THE FIRST EDITION

Whitman himself set some of the type for the original issue of Leaves of Grass

the binding—the former read simply *Leaves of Grass. Brooklyn, New York: 1855.* But facing the title-page was a frontispiece engraved from one of the most famous daguerreotypes in the history of American letters—the three-quarter figure of a bearded man in his thirties, in shirt sleeves, collar open and unfettered by cravat, black soft hat inclining toward the left ear, knuckles of right hand on hip, left hand in trousers pocket, the whole pose one of dignified swagger. This portrait was not titled, but any dunderhead would know it represented the author. The copyright, one learned on the reverse of the title page, had been entered "by Walter Whitman." On page twenty-nine the reader was told of "Walt Whitman, an American, one of the roughs, a kosmos"; two pages further on the author declared that "speech . . . provokes me forever. It says sarcastically, 'Walt, you understand yourself . . . why don't you let it out then?' " On page ninety-two were biographical and personal details; it appeared that the writer "was born on the 1st day of May 1819 . . . and that I grew six feet high . . . and that I have become a man thirty-six years old in 1855."

Exactly how many copies of the first edition were printed is not known—almost certainly fewer than nine hundred, possibly as few as five hundred. The price was set at two dollars—a somewhat forbidding figure in a day when one would soon be able to buy Mr. Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* for one dollar and could already buy Mr. Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* for seventy-five cents. Later, still without clogging the bookshops with customers, the price was cut in half.

III

Of the distribution and sale of the book little is known beyond the essential and inescapable fact that, however thorough the distribution may have been, there was virtually no sale. Copies were placed with the two bookstores of William W. Swayne, on Fulton Street, Brooklyn, and also with the publishing and bookselling establishment of Fowler and Wells of 308 Broadway, New York. This firm presumably supplied its branches in Philadelphia and Boston and its agencies throughout the country, stretching all the way to the boom town of San Francisco. As a publishing house Fowler and Wells were intensively devoted to the pseudo-science of phrenology. No one even jokes about phrenological "bumps" today, but in the era of Orson and Lorenzo Fowler and of Samuel R. Wells (who made the enterprise a family affair by marrying Orson's and Lorenzo's sister Charlotte) phrenology was thoroughly serious and respectable. European protagonists of the cause of phrenology had divided the brain into thirty faculties; the Fowlers and Wells expanded the total to forty-three. The Fowler brothers' numerous treatises on the subject included, among others, Orson's *Matrimony, or Phrenology Applied to the Selection of Companions* and Lorenzo's *Marriage, Its History and Philosophy, With Directions for Happy Marriages.* Not to be outdone in this department, perhaps, Mr. Wells some years later gave the world his *Wedlock, or the Right Relations of the Sexes.* The firm also issued the *Water-Cure Journal,* of which Mr. Wells, a pioneer American vegetarian, was editor. Despite this addiction to mental and physical faddism, Fowler and Wells knew how to sell

books, but *Leaves of Grass* was beyond even their capacities.

The closest approach to a land-office business (and a rather distant approach) must have been done by the Old Corner Bookstore of Boston, thanks to the energetic enthusiasm of Ralph Waldo Emerson. In preparing his study of *Walt Whitman: His Life and Work,* Professor Bliss Perry used a copy of the 1855 edition which William F. Channing (son of the great William Ellery) had bought there on Emerson's recommendation, and Professor Perry adds that Theodore Parker's copy, now in the Boston Public Library, probably was bought at the same shop. Emerson's own copy, of course, was sent him by Whitman, but Emerson certainly bought (at the Old Corner Bookstore) the copy he gave to F. B. Sanborn of Concord and the one he sent to Carlyle. It is reasonably certain that he bought and distributed several additional copies—one to Arthur Hugh Clough, among others.

It was not, however, through the agency of Emerson's distinguished friends that *Leaves of Grass* had its popular introduction into England. When, with a not unusual first-book-of-poetry obstinacy, the product declined to sell, the inevitable occurred. The unsold copies were remaindered, apparently as early as the end of 1854. Now the English representatives of Fowler and Wells were Horsell & Co. of Oxford Street, London, and copies of the first edition are known which bear a slip reading "London: Wm. Horsell, 492, Oxford-street" pasted across the middle of the title page. At the top of the title page of one copy bearing the Horsell label is the inscription "W. M. Rossetti from W. B. S. Xmas 1856," and this particular copy is perhaps the most important Christmas present in the history of

WHITMAN AT FORTY-SIX

From a hitherto unpublished photograph by Alexander Gardner in the collection of Alfred F. Goldsmith. On the reverse is written, in Whitman's hand: "Given to a comrade as a memento in Washington City, June 29, 1865. W.W."

American literature. For by this gift Whitman was introduced to the other half of the English-speaking world.

W. B. S. was William Bell Scott, Pre-Raphaelite poet and painter, and he describes in his *Autobiographical Notes,* published in 1892, two years after his death, how the historic volume came into his possession. In America, he explains, the book had been "ignored by all booksellers, who declined at first even to lay it on their counters"; subsequently he goes further and declares that the book "was never seen on the counter . . . of any American bookseller"—neither statement is exact, after the manner of many inclusive generalizations.

Apparently Horsell re-remaindered most of the copies that reached England, because some of them turned up as far away as Sunderland, two hundred and fifty miles from London and close to the Scottish border. There an eccentric merchant of odds and ends was trying to dispose of them by Dutch auction; that is, reducing the price by a certain figure from day to day until a buyer appeared. "Thomas Dixon," continues Scott, "my constant friend, a perceptive man and a public-spirited, though then only a working cork-cutter, sent the book to me as a curiosity." Scott subsequently "invested in several copies," and "the one I sent to W. M. R. was the cause of his editing the English edition, which raised Whitman into a celebrity."

Rossetti twice corroborates this testimony. The first English (1868) edition of *Leaves of Grass—Poems by Walt Whitman, Selected and Edited by William Michael Rossetti*—contains a long dedicatory letter to Scott in which full credit is given him for the discovery, and on the flyleaf of the copy of the 1855 edition which Scott gave him Rossetti has pencilled this note: "Some copies of

this (the original) edition of Leaves of Grass were brought over to England, and sold cheap as a remainder. Thos. Dixon the cork-cutter of Sunderland bought this copy, and gave it to W. B. Scott, who gave it to me."

Almost a quarter of a century after his historic gift to Rossetti, Scott bethought him to ask Dixon for a detailed narrative of the latter's acquisition of the book. Dixon's answer presents a remarkably complete account of one of the most romantic episodes in the history of bookselling:

There is a plan of dealing in books called hand-selling, which is selling by a kind of auction, the dealers who adopt this plan not being lawfully-qualified auctioneers. The value (upset price) of a book is gradually reduced until somebody takes it. Say it starts at five shillings, then it is reduced less and less, till it comes to a shilling or sixpence. A man came here at that time (I think it must have been about the beginning of the year 1856), James Grindrod by name, following this trade, with a stock of books that had missed their market, or had never been rightly published at all. Long after this—long after the American War was finished—he came back again to Sunderland and recommenced the bookselling trade in the old way, but his wife (from whom he had been separated, though he had left her in a comfortable way of business) being still here, made him soon leave the town again. I was very sorry for this, because he used to bring such lots of wonderful curious books—books you don't in a regular way see. Since then we have never had a man like him in this trade. He used to come and take tea with me on the Sunday afternoons, and then I found out he had been in the thick of the American Civil War as well as Whitman. He did not care to speak of his war experiences, only my sympathy used to draw him out, for I longed to hear how they had pulled through. He had joined one of the States regiments, and was most part of the time in the army led by General Sherman. He was with Sherman in all the fearful raids towards the end, and was often without food, and was

many times compelled to eat almost anything, however loathsome, they could find during arduous marches in the wasted country; he saw many men drop down and die for want of food. "But when we did reach the dépôts where food was, we were all taken very good care of and nursed; but I never in all my life experienced any trial like that want of food during these raids." He was with Sherman at the taking of Atlanta, and then he got his discharge with others of the men who had done the same hard service.

He would not remain in Sunderland, though he could sell his books. He travelled about, went into Lancashire, and there met his death in a railway collision in a tunnel a year or two afterwards. So you now have the history of the book.

This interesting recital, it will be noted, omits one important detail. How much did Dixon pay for the book? On the inside back cover of the copy which Dixon gave Scott, and which Scott gave Rossetti, appears the penciled notation "2/6." Was this the upset price, or the figure at which Dixon acquired it? Either way it was a bargain.

IV

Scott exaggerates slightly, if unintentionally, when he declares that it was the 1868 London edition of *Poems by Walt Whitman* which raised the author "into a celebrity." Emerson had performed that substantial service for him thirteen years before. Completely won by his perusal of the copy of the first edition which Whitman had sent him, he addressed to Whitman, on July 21, 1855, the most enthusiastic letter that poetic novitiate ever received from contemporary Olympian. "I am not blind to the wonderful worth of the gift of 'Leaves of Grass,'" it began, and among the striking phrases that would have

brought joy to an advertising copy writer (and did bring joy to the keen publicity sense of Whitman) were these: "The most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed," "incomparable things, said incomparably well," "the solid sense of the book is a sober certainty." But most pleasing of all to Whitman's vanity were the words: "I greet you at the beginning of a great career."

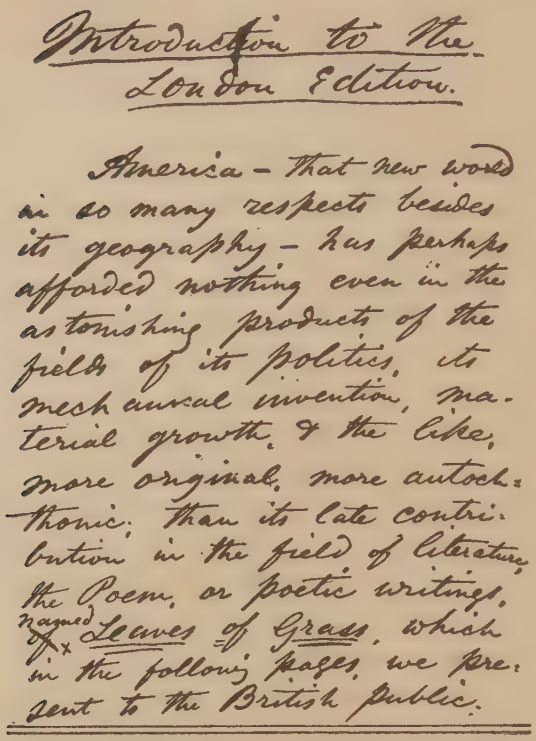
When, more than a year later, the second edition of *Leaves of Grass* was issued, this fulsome ten-word testimonial was emblazoned on that part of the book where it would do the most good—the bottom of the backstrip—with due credit to Emerson. The propriety of the thing has been abundantly debated; it is enough to say that some slight defense at least can be advanced for an apparently gross violation of good taste. Emerson's own final appraisal of the incident is matter for conjecture; certainly the subsequent relations of the two men could not have been more cordial if the famous letter had never been exploited.

Whitman did more than reproduce the Emerson endorsement on the backstrip of the new edition. He had the whole letter put in type and several copies run off—how many is uncertain. Surmounting the text on these single sheets was a bracketed heading in small italics which read: "Copy for the convenience of private reading only"—one may imagine just how private Whitman wanted the reading to be. Only two copies of this broadside are known to be extant. One was included among the Emerson items in the Stephen H. Wakeman collection of American authors sold at the American Art Associa-

tion's rooms in New York in 1924. It brought two hundred and thirty dollars.

More important, from both the biographical and bibliographical points of view, are the reasons for the publication of a second edition. In the appendix to this edition called "Leaves-Droppings" Whitman reproduced the Emerson letter and a reply (dated thirteen months later) which declared, among other things, that he had printed "a thousand copies" of the 1855 edition "and they readily sold." The thousand copies were certainly a severe exaggeration, the ready sale was the most blatant ballyhoo. The book had attracted some notice in the press, favorable, unfavorable and bewildered, but it had not sold. Whitman had collected these notices (including three written by himself) and bound them up in later copies of the 1855 edition—one of the distinguishing marks of the second issue of the first edition—but book-buying America remained unimpressed.

Why, then, a second edition? Because Whitman had a big bulk of fresh manuscript, and because he was now prepared to devote his means, his life (as, with few intermissions, he did devote it) to adding to the store of his *Leaves* and getting the product before the public. Never was such an author-salesman in the history of literature. A campaign had begun that lasted to the day of his death, its phases marked, as Alfred F. Goldsmith, compiler, with Carolyn Wells, of *A Concise Bibliography of the Works of Walt Whitman,* has noted, by the publication of a new edition of *Leaves of Grass* at approximately five-year intervals—1856, 1860–'61, 1867, 1871, 1876, 1881–'82, 1888. Thereafter the dates of publication fall


Introduction to the
London Edition.

America – that new world
in so many respects besides
its geography – has perhaps
afforded nothing even in the
astonishing products of the
fields of its politics, its
mechanical invention, ma-
terial growth, & the like,
more original, more autoch-
thonic, than its late contri-
bution in the field of literature,
the Poem, or poetic writings,
named Leaves of Grass, which
in the following pages, we pre-
sent to the British public.

THE POET AS SELF-CRITIC

Opening, in Whitman's hand, of his introduction to the 1881 London edition of Leaves of Grass

closely enough together to signalize acceptance, though the old war-horse would not yield the struggle even when it was won.

The 1856 edition is a stodgy twelvemo of three hundred and eighty-four pages. The familiar daguerreotype reappears, still without a caption; the title page reads simply *Leaves of Grass Brooklyn, New York, 1856*. The copyright is in the name of Walt (not Walter) Whitman. The poems are titled; "I celebrate myself" is now designated

"Poem of Walt Whitman, an American." Altogether there are thirty-two poems, as against the twelve in the 1855 edition. One thousand copies were printed, and enjoyed a slightly happier fate than their illustrious predecessors, without, however, elevating the author to affluence. The book sold for a dollar, at which price copies could be had postpaid of Fowler and Wells, who published the edition, but were chary of allowing their name to be used on the title page. A copy of this second edition is now sufficiently hard to find to be worth, in good condition, around seventy-five dollars.

"I firmly believe," A. Edward Newton once asserted, "that the first edition of the 'Leaves of Grass' will reach a higher figure than any other important book published in the nineteenth century." When this declaration was written, in 1924, *Leaves of Grass* was selling in the auction market at two hundred dollars or less (generally less)—not a startling price compared to *Tamerlane*, *Fanshawe* or even *Tom Sawyer*. Three years later a copy was auctioned for the then incredible figure of eight hundred dollars, and in the interval since then the price has risen, at auction and in rare booksellers' catalogues, to around three thousand dollars, with no indication that a summit of value has been reached. Whitman, could he return to earth, would be gratified by all this recognition, but not, perhaps, startled out of complacency. For his was the faith that moves mountains of unsaleable books.

DANIEL DEFOE AND *ROBINSON CRUSOE*

I

IF there is anything in a name, Thomas Stradling was bowlegged. And as a man's trade inevitably puts some mark upon him, Thomas Stradling was certainly bowlegged. He was a sailor—a captain, no less, at the instant of his sudden propulsion into history—but sea-leggedness is no respecter of ratings. This was in 1704, when virtually no ocean liner was equipped with elevators, gymnasiums, swimming pools, or class distinctions save those existing between the captain and everybody else. Captains, to become and to remain captains, had to be hard-boiled. Thomas Stradling, unless gross injustice has been done him, was alive to his obligations.

Probably in none of his voyages had Captain Stradling been cursed with such a mate as he drew on the *Cinque Ports*. The mate had temperament, but the captain had the rank, which counted for infinitely more on the high seas. The mate—his name was Alexander Selkirk, born Selcraig, and he was a seventh son—was a young Scotsman who had raised a hullabaloo in church and had been requested to appear before the elders in order that disciplinary action might be taken. Alexander had gone away from there. The elders thereupon doubtless shook their heads and conjectured that young Selkirk would come to no good end. The name of no one of the elders survives,

but that of Selkirk has endured hardily for two hundred years and will outlast the English tongue, though chiefly under an alias. His right to immortality there is none to dispute.

Things came to a head between the captain and the mate when they were ashore, which is unusual. Dispositions are supposed to become frazzled at sea and to mend immediately on land. The *Cinque Ports* had put in at the island of Juan Fernandez, off the coast of Chile. The captain and the mate had a culminating row, and the mate expressed his perfect willingness to remain where he was rather than put up with the captain's ironic hegemony any longer. One is reminded of the mate on the New Bedford whaler who, in a somewhat analogous situation, insisted that all he asked of his skipper was a civil answer to a civil question.

Captain Stradling, presumably, was supposed to weep salt tears and pledge himself to a course of conduct similar to that subsequently pursued by Captain Corcoran of H. M. S. *Pinafore*. Instead he took the mate at his word. The *Cinque Ports* sailed away without Alexander Selkirk, who repented of the bargain as soon as it was made, and rushed into the shallow water as the vessel slowly pulled away, his hands extended, and his mouth incredibly full of humble pie.

Four years and four months passed, and Alexander Selkirk was rescued. One may assume that he was courteous to the salvaging skipper. At any rate, he sailed with him for three years, greatly to his own profit. He returned to England late in 1711 tolerably well off. All the bright young newspapermen interviewed him, none of them quite so bright as Dick Steele, unless Daniel Defoe hap-

pened to have met him, which is one of the debated businesses of literary history.

II

In 1703, a few months before embarking on his momentous voyage with Thomas Stradling, Alexander Selkirk may or may not have noticed an advertisement praying for the apprehension of "a middle-sized, spare man, about forty years old, of a brown complexion, and dark brown-colored hair, but wears a wig; a hooked nose, a sharp chin, grey eyes, and a large mole near his mouth." The person sought was this same Defoe, christened Foe, but adding the "de" for appearance's sake—irked, perhaps, by his father's having been a butcher. Young De Foe, as he meant to have it spelled, had entertained for a time the idea of becoming a dissenting minister, but had gone into hosiery instead. The venture was not profitable, nor were several other commercial excursions that followed it.

About the year 1700, when he was in his fortieth year (not long before the advertisements appeared), he found himself. It had taken time to do it, but he had hit on his trade at last. He became a journalist, and English and American journalism has yet to produce his all-around peer. Reporter, editorial writer, feature writer, rewrite man—he was all of these, and let it not be forgotten that he was also the father of the fake story. He was superb as political reporter and propagandist, and he was such a master of irony that, as often in the case of master ironists, he was sometimes misunderstood. That was why, in 1703, his pamphlet *The Shortest Way With the Dissenters* re-

DEFOE IN THE PILLORY

From the engraving by J. C. Armytage after the painting by Crowe

sulted in the issuance of the description which has been detailed. He spent a little time in Newgate and knew the feel of the pillory against his wrists and neck, but Alexander Pope's reference to his earlessness was merely an instance of the wish fathering the thought.

His durance was not particularly vile, for his captors deemed it the part of prudence to accord him liberties not granted the run of prisoners. A few months after his commitment this irrepressible penman began to issue a weekly paper, the *Review*, and was soon putting it out twice a week. His prison mates, fallen on evil days by more romantic errors than the writing of political tracts, found in Defoe an intent listener and interrogator. No man, with the possible exception of Samuel Pepys, ever had so great a capacity for being interested as Defoe. To him every living creature was an absorbing unwritten biography, every phenomenon of common or uncommon existence a fragment to be fixed in the exciting mosaic of experience—an observation to be ticketed and stored away in the vast catalogue of his intellect. All was grist that came to the mill of that superbly alert but never fantastic imagination.

For the next fifteen years Defoe was kept busy trimming the sails of his career to the fickle winds of partisan politics—a business which he handled with consummate skill—and writing. His productivity has never been surpassed, in England or anywhere else. That virtually no least rivulet of this ordered flood of words survives save in the eyes of the student of the history and the literature of his epoch is of no moment to the analyst of Defoe's genius; he was not writing for posterity, but for the life and times of Daniel Defoe. No one would have been readier than himself to concede the ephemerality of these

productions—they were hammers that struck while the iron of affairs was hot, and if the stroke told they had done their work.

III

In 1719 Defoe was getting on toward sixty and had lived more than most men could have done in twice that time. Had he died then his passing would have won mild notice in London and none in history, save in footnotes in abstruse histories of journalism. Had he died then, and had a list of his writings been inscribed on his tombstone, that tombstone must needs have been a prototype of the Washington Monument. Some two hundred and fifty separate publications existed as part testimony to his industry. Half a dozen or so remained to be added, but they are the half dozen that the well-educated man of today knows about, and he may be tolerably educated and know the name of only one—which knowledge he must share with half the human race.

Defoe's status at the time was an approximation to retirement—as close an approximation to retirement as he ever reached. But his was a pen that never knew when it was time to retire. It must be busy with something, and something which proved that the hand that held it was close to the public pulse. Parliament was busy about pirates, the effect of the salutary but probably unjust execution of William Kidd eighteen years before having spent itself. Men's eyes were turned to the sea just as they had been in the great days of Elizabeth and James and Charles. A sea story, a true sea story, would be read. Daniel Defoe wrote it.

There is a report, quite unsupported by evidence, that

CRUSOE AS A TWO-GUN MAN

From the frontispiece of the first edition, the work of an unnamed draughtsman

he had considerable trouble disposing of the manuscript. But dispose of it he did, and, by a happy coincidence, to William Taylor, "at the Ship in Pater-Noster-Row," that narrow little alley out of which many a frail literary craft has sailed to immortality. The title was registered on April 23, 1719. The book was called *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner.* It was "written by himself," which estab-

lishes Defoe as one of the earliest ghost writers in the business. In three months it had run through four editions. On the theory that nothing succeeds like success, Defoe hastened to write a second part, and subsequently a third. But "where millions have read Crusoe Part I, and thousands Crusoe Part II," declares Thomas Wright in his biography of Defoe, "only units have ever even heard of Part III."

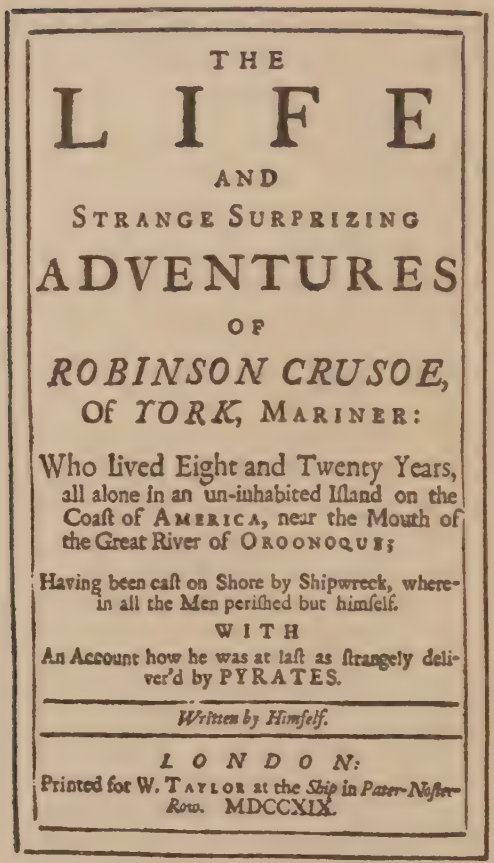
The millions have shown sound literary judgment in leaving Parts II and III to the thousands and the units. Defoe was too much the journalistic opportunist to let go of a good thing when he had it. Writers of as great talent, writers of less talent, and writers of less guile have many times since 1719 made the legitimate attempt to repeat successes in sequels, and while sequels are rarely commercial failures (provided the books that inspired them were not), not often will they bear critical comparison with their forerunners. The classic exception is *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *Huckleberry Finn* is just about the solitary exception that proves the rule. Part II of *Robinson Crusoe* did all that Defoe expected of it—it was a successful book. Two editions were published in 1719 and two more in 1722. It was written under forced draft, but Defoe was quite competent to turn out copy in an emergency—particularly an emergency that was likely to produce a profit.

Part III—*Serious Reflections During the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe: With His Vision of the Angelick World*—was not a success; had it, too, met with popular favor there is no telling how many more parts might have followed. The prominence given the word *Vision* on the title-page may have evidenced a desire on Defoe's part to coast along with *The Pilgrim's*

Progress, published forty-two years earlier and still a best seller—Robinson Crusoe himself had read the book, and mentions it in his *Serious Reflections*. Part III is of interest, apart from the text, as including by way of frontispiece a fascinating folding plate of Crusoe's island.

To Part III Publisher William Taylor contributed his own serious reflections in a "Publisher's Introduction." "The success the two former parts have met with," he remarked, "has been known by the envy it has brought upon the editor, expressed in a thousand hard words from the men of trade; the effect of that regret which they entertained at their having no share in it." Most interesting among the contributors of these thousand hard words was Charles Gildon, who wrote *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Mr. D— De F—, of London, Hosier, Who Has Lived Above Fifty Years by Himself in the Kingdom of North and South Britain. . . . In a Dialogue between Himself, Robinson Crusoe, and His Man Friday. With Remarks Serious and Comical upon the Life of Crusoe.* Gildon, whatever his motives, deserves recognition as the first indicator of several pleasant absurdities which Defoe was sufficiently impressed with to correct in subsequent editions. At the beginning of Chapter IV Crusoe "resolved, if possible, to get to the ship; so I pulled off my clothes, for the weather was hot to extremity, and took the water." Reaching the vessel, "I went to the bread-room and filled my pockets with biscuit."

It would be of romantic interest if such a detail as this were the determining mark of a copy of the first issue of *Robinson Crusoe*. Unfortunately—or fortunately—*Robinson Crusoe* offers one of the most complex problems in the whole domain of bibliography. A collation of the



THE

LIFE

AND

STRANGE SURPRIZING

ADVENTURES

OF

ROBINSON CRUSOE,

Of *YORK*, MARINER:

Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an un-inhabited Iſland on the Coaſt of AMERICA, near the Mouth of the Great River of OROONOQUE;

Having been caſt on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men periſhed but himſelf.

WITH

An Account how he was at laſt as ſtrangely deliver'd by PYRATES.

Written by Himſelf.

LONDON:

Printed for W. TAYLOR at the *Ship* in *Pater-Noſter-Row*. MDCCXIX.

The title page made a perfect advertisement for the book

various issues cannot be attempted here. The story is available in Henry Clinton Hutchins's *Robinson Crusoe and Its Printing* (Columbia University Press, 1925) a quarto volume of nearly two hundred pages devoted in large measure to a meticulous comparison of early issues and an enumeration of the differences that properly have so

vast a significance to the bibliographer and the collector.

Dr. Hutchins estimates that the first edition of Part I consisted of from a thousand to fifteen hundred copies. The book is now "by no means so scarce as some people suppose," he declares; selling for five shillings at a time when that sum was as good as a pound or more today, it probably went principally into the hands of readers who would be more considerate of their purchases than the average original owner of a *Pilgrim's Progress*. Such is the desirability of the first edition of *Robinson Crusoe* today, however, that it comes high. The Jerome Kern copy of Parts I, II and III sold at the Anderson Galleries in New York on January 8, 1929, for $11,500. A little more than four years earlier, at the dispersal of the library of Beverly Chew, the same copy had brought $5350.

William Taylor died in the spring of 1724, leaving a fortune reputed by contemporary gossip to be between forty and fifty thousand pounds. In the succeeding January William Innys, friend, fellow bookseller, and one of the executors of his estate, married "the Relict of Mr. Taylor, late of Paternoster Row, and worth thirty thousand Pounds." The earlier estimate of Taylor's wealth was doubtless exaggerated—either that or Mrs. Taylor enjoyed eight months of riotous widowhood, for which theory no slightest evidence exists. During the previous summer Taylor's business had been sold to Thomas Longman, founder of the present publishing house of Longmans, Green and Company, which still occupies the site from which *Robinson Crusoe* set forth on his strange and surprising and highly profitable adventures. Whatever the size of the estate which William Taylor left, it was cer-

tainly considerable for his day and profession, and his connection with Defoe as certainly provided no inconsiderable share of it.

IV

In one respect *Robinson Crusoe* enjoys a unique position in the annals of publishing. It was the first serial ever printed, though serialization followed instead of preceding book publication. Not quite six months after the appearance of the book the story began to run in *The Original London Post, or Heathcot's Intelligence; Being a Collection of the Freshest Advices Foreign and Domestik.* Until 1928 only two sets of the numbers of this periodical containing the serial were known; in March of that year a collection of Defoe and Defoeana which included a third set of *Heathcot's Intelligence* was sold at Sotheby's. The *New York Times* for March 28th carried a special dispatch about the sale wherein the correspondent described the previously known copies as embracing an imperfect set in the British Museum and "one in the library at Newton, Philadelphia." A. Edward Newton, obviously, has become a part of all that he has met.

The serial version opened, quite properly, with the preface as originally presented in the book, which preface establishes Defoe as the father of the publisher's blurb. With only a few slight alterations to make eighteenth-century idiom conform to modern publicity requirements, the following announcement would be eminently suitable to the jacket of a contemporary parallel of *Crusoe:*

> If ever the Story of any private Man's Adventures in the World were worth making Publick, and were acceptable when

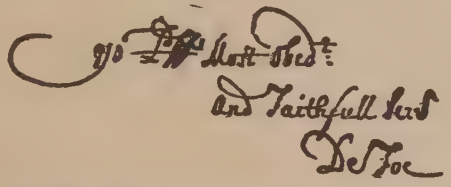
Published, the Editor of this Account thinks this will be so.

The Wonders of this Man's Life exceed all that (he thinks) is to be found Extant; the Life of one Man being scarce capable of a greater Variety.

The Story is told with Modesty, with Seriousness, and with a religious Application of Events to the Use to which wise Men always apply them, viz. to the Instruction of others by this Example, and to justify and honour the Wisdom of Providence in all the variety of our Circumstances, let them happen how they will.

The Editor believes the thing to be a just History of Fact; neither is there any appearance of Faction in it: And however thinks, because all such things are dispatched, that the Improvement of it, as well to the Diversion, as to the Instruction of the Reader, will be the same; and as such, he thinks, without further Compliment to the World, he does them a great service in the Publication.

There are two curious misprints in this preface as it is presented in *Heathcot's Intelligence*, both in the last paragraph: *Faction* for *Fiction* and *dispatched* for *disputed*.



The first of these must have been particularly startling to Defoe, who at last was not writing political tracts but a harmless narrative with no attempt at propaganda in it, save for the attempt to have the story accepted as "a just History of Fact." The fraud may be readily condoned except for the detail that Defoe took care to date his account ahead of Selkirk's adventures, which was not quite cricket.

"The idea that *Robinson Crusoe* was 'a boy's book' would have filled Defoe with amazement," Mr. Newton declares. It is, of course, one of those books which "everybody has read" and which, in real fact, very few persons have read. "Everybody" has read it in one of the hundreds of abridgments which have appeared in the last two centuries, just as everybody is familiar with the illustrations of a book that few noted artists have neglected to illustrate in the same interval. It is interesting to know that the earliest abridgment appeared as early as 1722.

The possibilities of *Robinson Crusoe* as a children's book were declared as early as 1762 (while men still lived who had read the work in first edition) with the appearance of Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Emile*. Emile, at fifteen, is introduced to a book—not Aristotle, not Pliny, not Buffon: "No, it is *Robinson Crusoe*." Rousseau, of course, was concerned with the book's pedagogic advantages, but his influence was sufficient not only to make him a landmark in the history of education and to inspire a whole cycle of children's books in England, but to make *Robinson Crusoe* famous as a story and not alone as a textbook in self-reliance for the young.

Pirated issues came before abridgments. They began to appear, in fact, almost before the ink on the sheets of the legitimate first edition was dry. The early ones are of considerable bibliographic importance, particularly the famous "O" edition, so called because it spelled its hero's name "Cruso." It did better than that, in fact, by assigning him the given name of "Robeson." A long debate raged with one side attempting to prove that the "O" edition was the actual *princeps*, but it was a losing struggle. Mr. Hutchins discusses the puzzle at length, and the evidence as he

presents it makes it clear that the original Taylor edition antedates all others. The "O" edition was merely a practical expression of the envy felt by "the men of trade at their having no share in it."

Considerable argument has also been devoted to the problem of the precise location of Crusoe's island. It existed, of course, only in the mind of Defoe, and far less clearly, as a definite spot on the map, than the villages in Thomas Hardy's Wessex. The sole certainty in the matter is that the real Selkirk spent his real exile on the real island of Juan Fernandez.

No evidence exists to provide an answer to a question that must occur to every student of *Robinson Crusoe:* Did Selkirk himself ever read or know about the book? He survived until two years after its appearance, probably spending most of the interval at sea. It seems entirely likely that he knew of the book's existence, but one can only conjecture his mental reaction to that knowledge. Was he pleased, flattered, indignant? Did he attempt to capitalize the fame that could have accrued to him living, or did anyone attempt to capitalize it for him?

V

Men are alive today whose grandfathers might have known Hugh Gaine, and Gaine was born in Ireland five years before the death of Defoe. He emigrated to New York, and in 1750 set up as a printer and bookseller. Two years later he established the weekly *Mercury,* himself setting the type, working the press, distributing the product, and (one may be sure) making the collections. The outbreak of the Revolution drove him across river and

marsh to Newark, press and all, an exodus which recalls the nobler departure, half a century later, of the first Samuel Bowles from Hartford, loading his press on a flatboat and setting forth up the Connecticut River to establish the *Springfield Republican.*

With the British securely in possession of New York (and the war, in Gaine's opinion, as good as won), he returned to resume publication of the *Mercury* under the protection of the Georgian arms. As cautious a work of reference as *Appleton's Cyclopædia of American Biography* records of Gaine that though "he led an exemplary life," none the less "he seems to have been almost without conscientious convictions." And Sabine's *Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution*—not the most desirable of *Who's Whos*—says of him, with italicized bluntness: "His political creed seems to have consisted of but one article, and that—*to keep with the strongest party.*" Defoe would have handled the affair more adroitly.

Gaine was man enough or confused enough not to re-retreat to Newark with the cessation of hostilities. He held his ground, and petitioned the State Legislature for permission to remain. Shift and counter-shift were so palpable that he was fair game for triumphant Yankee satirists:

> As matters have gone, it was plainly a blunder,
> But *then* I expected the Whigs must knock under,
> And I always adhere to the sword that is longest,
> And stick to the party that's like to be strongest;
> That you have succeeded is merely a chance;
> I never once dreamt of the conduct of France!

He swallowed the ridicule and stuck to his muttons—that is, publishing and bookselling, for the authorities,

reasonably enough, would not countenance the restoration of the *Mercury*. He amassed a fortune, and died in 1807 at the age of eighty-one.

Books bearing the imprint of Hugh Gaine are valuable on that account alone; when they happen in addition to be notable books their value is thereby vastly enhanced. That Hugh Gaine had published the first American edition of *Robinson Crusoe* was long matter of common bibliographical knowledge, thanks to the meticulous researches of Paul Leicester Ford, but the exact date was not known—it was presumed to be 1775 on the evidence of advertisements in later Gaine books. Not until 1929, however, was the puzzle solved with the discovery of a single copy (which so far remains unique) of *The Wonderful Life and Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, Who Lived Twenty-Eight Years on an Uninhabited Island Which He Afterwards Colonized*, printed at New York "by Hugh Gaine at his Book-Store in Hanover-Square, where may be had a great Variety of Little Books for Young Masters and Misses," and bearing the magic and unrecorded date of 1774. The story of the discovery was set forth in detail by George S. Sargent in the *Boston Evening Transcript* for February 9, 1929.

This prototype of New World *Crusoes* is little larger than a malformed playing-card, measuring as it does only four by three and one-eighth inches. It is notable especially for its seven full-page woodcuts, though the woodcuts are themselves far from notable—they are the work of an unnamed and perhaps forever unnameable artist, which, for the sake of his memory, is just as well. The book extends to only 138 pages, and is, of course, a drastic abridgment of the original London edition.

Four pages of advertisements of other children's books published by Hugh Gaine follow the text, and these advertisements, from the historical point of view, are rather more important than the text itself. The titles are worth citing as examplars of the juvenile literature of colonial America:

The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes: Otherwise called, Mrs. Margery Two-Shoes. With the Means by which she acquired her Learning and Wisdom, and in Consequence thereof her Estate.

The New-Year's Gift; or, The First Book to teach every little Girl and Boy the A B C. Containing the Life and Death of the Apple-Pye, with A was an Archer, Cock Robin's Farewel to all the Birds in the Air, and Naughty Boy Jack.

Grammatical Institutes; or, An Easy Introduction to Dr. Lowth's English Grammar, designed for the Use of Schools. And to lead young Gentlemen and Ladies, into the Knowledge of the first Principles of the English Language. By John Ash. With an Appendix, containing, I. The Declension of irregular and defective Verbs. II. The Application of the Grammatical Institutes. III. Some useful Observations on the Ellipsis. To which is now added, Select Lessons, to instil just Sentiments of Virtue in Youth. And a Collection of Books proper for young Gentlemen and Ladies, to shorten the Path to Knowledge. The Seventh Edition, revised and corrected.

A Pretty Play-Thing for Children of all Denominations: containing, I. The Alphabet in Verse, for the Use of Little Children. II. Tom Noddy and his Sister Sue, a Lilliputian Story. III. The Sound of the Letters explained by visible Objects. IV. An Alphabet in Prose, interspersed with proper Lessons in Life, for the Use of Great Children. V. The Cuz's Chorus set to Music: to be sung by Children, in order to teach them to join their Letters into Syllables, and pronounce them properly. VI. An exact Representation of a good Fat Cuz arrayed in the Robes of his Order.

A day has come that knows not fat cuzzes, but *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes* still endures, although the attribution of its authorship to Oliver Goldsmith is still without assured foundation. The advertisement in the Gaine *Crusoe,* however, is of supreme bibliographical importance. The earliest *Goody Two-Shoes* which survives is dated 1775; it is as certain as anything in this world can be that the tiny book was first published several years before, but no copy with an earlier date has ever been produced to prove it. If a copy of the Gaine edition of 1774 (or possibly 1773) should turn up it would spring into bibliographic prominence as the earliest known issue of the story, regardless of place of publication.

An interesting bit of testimony to the popularity of *Robinson Crusoe* was provided in America in 1850. In the summer of that year the Journeymen Printers' Union of Philadelphia was organized and presented a new wage scale to the city's employing printers. By the day fixed for its adoption not all the master printers had agreed to the new schedule, and as a result nearly a fourth of the members of the organization were thrown out of work. "To enable these to maintain themselves in their effort to secure what a majority of the employers conceded to be a just remuneration for their labour," the union published its own *Robinson Crusoe* "thereby to give partial employment to its members, during the period when they might be under the necessity of remaining *on a strike.*" Thus the advertisement to the third edition of this mid-century Philadelphia *Crusoe*—a first edition of a thousand copies and a second of two thousand "were subscribed for immediately on the appearance of the first number. A third

and enlarged edition is now called for, and the Union is greatly encouraged by the prospect of a still more rapid and extensive sale." The advertisement is a restrained and dignified document save for a single irritated paragraph: "The *strike* has now continued five weeks; and only five individuals have left the cause to which they had solemnly pledged themselves and subscribed their names. These, in printers' language, are denominated *rats*, and as such, no doubt, they will find snares set for themselves at every opening to their lurking places."

Defoe's all-encompassing interest would have been stirred by this adoption of his most successful "history" as a weapon in a dispute between capital and labor. Had he survived to witness the incident he would have soon known more about it than anyone concerned in it and would have taken sides accordingly—perhaps both sides.

CHARLES DICKENS AND *THE PICKWICK PAPERS*

I

IT was early in the spring of the year 1836, and a doubly momentous season in the life of a twenty-four-year old reporter for the London *Morning Chronicle* named Charles John Huffam Dickens. On the last day of March the first thin number of a humorous work on which he was engaged was to be published. Two days later he was going to be married. The humorous work, initiated as a highly speculative enterprise that threatened throughout its infancy to become merely one more unit in the sum of forgotten literary catastrophes, turned suddenly into one of the great publishing triumphs of history. The marriage, twenty-two years later, drifted like a water-logged derelict against the rocks of domestic disaster. On the reasonable theory of the greatest good to the greatest number, one may be pardoned, nearly a century after the event, for finding comfort in the fact that, if one of the two ventures was headed for eventual collapse, it was not the humorous work.

At the moment, however, the course of true love was running smooth. "They have made me an offer of fourteen pounds a month," the bridegroom-to-be confided enthusiastically to his lady, "to write and edit a new publication they contemplate, entirely by myself, to be published

monthly. . . . The work will be no joke, but the emolument is too tempting to resist." He apparently reserved for oral transmission the fact that, in view of the expenses invariably attending the establishment of a new ménage, he had requested of "them," and had received, two months' advance pay.

Had Mr. Dickens, however, been looking forward to his funeral instead of to his wedding, he might have been pardoned for surveying his about-to-be-terminated career with complacent satisfaction. At thirteen he had been covering pots of blacking "first with a piece of oil paper, and then with a piece of blue paper," securing the papers with a string, then trimming the edges shipshape and pasting a label on each pot—this for six shillings a week. At sixteen he was working in a solicitor's office for thirteen and six a week, subsequently increased to sixteen shillings. At nineteen he was a reporter, and in four years had attained to five guineas a week. He had begun to do a little writing on the side, and the success of some short pieces which he had turned in to the evening edition of his own paper had emboldened him to bid for more pay. The Englishman calls it a rise, and the American a raise, but a raise by any name at all smells sweet, and, contrary to the vast majority of similar requests, this one was granted. Mr. Dickens was now making seven guineas a week—not at all bad after those lean months in the blacking factory. On top of this achievement he had blossomed forth as the author of a book. The short pieces which he had contributed to the *Evening Chronicle* and a couple of magazines had been assembled into a rather imposing volume called *Sketches by Boz*. The name Boz meant little outside the Dickens family (though some of the

pieces had been so signed in periodical publication), but the name of the illustrator meant considerable. He was a friend of the author's called George Cruikshank.

The request for the increase in pay had been penned from Dickens's lodgings at 15 Furnival's Inn little more than a year before. Here, early in 1836, Dickens was

15 FURNIVAL'S INN
Where Dickens wrote the early numbers of Pickwick

still making his home. Guests were received in an "uncarpeted and bleak-looking room" furnished with "a deal table, two or three chairs and a few books." So reported, at about this time, the fastidious Nathaniel P. Willis, who entrusted his dignity to "a ricketty chair," studied "a fine face," and noted other intimate characteristics: "His hair was cropped close to his head, his clothes scant, though jauntily cut, and after changing a ragged office coat for

a shabby blue, he stood by the door, collarless and buttoned up, the very personification, I thought, of a close sailer to the wind." Dickens's Boswell, John Forster, who quotes the Willis account, adds his recollection of himself and Dickens "laughing heartily at this description, hardly a word of which is true, and I give it now as no unfair specimen of the kind of garbage that since his death also has been served up only too plentifully."

Humanity must be grateful, however, for whatever morsels of verity survive in this portrait, for it is the only one extant which exhibits the *Chronicle* reporter and his domestic environment at an epochal moment in his career. For at about this time an interview took place in this "uncarpeted and bleak-looking room" (if it really did look bleak—Mr. Willis would not have been likely to err about the carpet) of which the world would like a detailed account, the dialogue stenographically set down, all the minutiæ of incident and locale rendered with photographic exactitude.

The burden of that dialogue was borne at the outset by a Mr. Hall—William Hall. Mr. Hall was a publisher, the associate of Edward Chapman. Both were in their thirties—young in years as well as in publishing experience. Three months earlier they had put out a little book called the *Squib Annual*, with illustrations by Robert Seymour, who was far from being the least known and least popular illustrator in a picture-book age.

Seymour was around thirty-eight—older than either Chapman or Hall, more than half again as old as Dickens. It was Seymour's supreme misfortune that in the critical conflicts of his career he had younger men for opponents, and that they won—it is more difficult for the thirties to

bow to the twenties than it is for the sixties. Two years earlier there had been a quarrel with Gilbert Abbott à Beckett, twenty-three-year old editor of *Figaro in London*, the closest approximation to *Punch* of that pre-*Punch* day. Seymour was more or less a self-taught artist. He had done his earliest work on wood and then shifted to copper, achieving a reputation in this medium over the signature Sheepshanks. But George Cruikshank, who stood out for his rights if ever man did, offered a reasonable remonstrance, and Robert Seymour had ridden on to a modicum of fame as Robert Seymour. He was a glutton for work, a fact which may have contributed to the last disaster, and it is worth while to mention that some of his early (but by no means apprentice) drawings were paid for at the rate of half a guinea each.

The success of the *Squib Annual* had heartened both parties to the contract, and a "series of Cockney sporting plates" (Seymour's idea) had been discussed with Chapman and Hall but no further step taken. Seymour at length asked for a definite decision, as something else offered that he wanted to put his hand to if nothing was going to come of the sporting-plate idea. Chapman and Hall decided to go ahead with the plan, provided the plates were accompanied by humorous text. Seymour agreed, which brought up the question of who his teammate was to be. Finally the name of the author of the *Chronicle* sketches was suggested. Hence Mr. Hall's visit to 15 Furnival's Inn.

How long the visit lasted neither of the principals ever divulged, perhaps for the reason that neither put himself to the trouble of taking account of the time. Mr. Hall, however, left with the conviction that his new author was

the sort of man who knew how to get what he wanted. Mr. Hall's proposal had been that the artist should produce four humorous engravings on sporting subjects every month, and that Mr. Dickens should turn out a quantity of copy based on the engravings. Mr. Dickens submitted a counter-proposal. The copy must be supplied first; the engravings must be based on the copy—the horse would have to be put before the cart, not after it. Mr. Hall was obviously tremendously impressed by the argument, or by the personality of the man who made it, or by both. At all events he yielded.

The days immediately following the consummation of this agreement must have been hectic ones, and events were about to occur that would augment the frenzy. Actually, in striking the bargain with Hall, Dickens inaugurated a career that was to be a perpetual race with the printer to the very day thirty-four years later which would leave the sixth part of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* forever unfinished.

II

On March 31, 1836, appeared the first green-wrappered number of *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club, Containing a Faithful Record of the Perambulations, Perils, Travels, Adventures and Sporting Transactions of the Corresponding Members. Edited by "Boz." With Four Illustrations by Seymour.* The event created no more stir than would the birth today of an American baby who may sometime be President. James Grant, editor of the *Monthly Magazine*, in which many of Dickens's early sketches had appeared, recorded later that during its

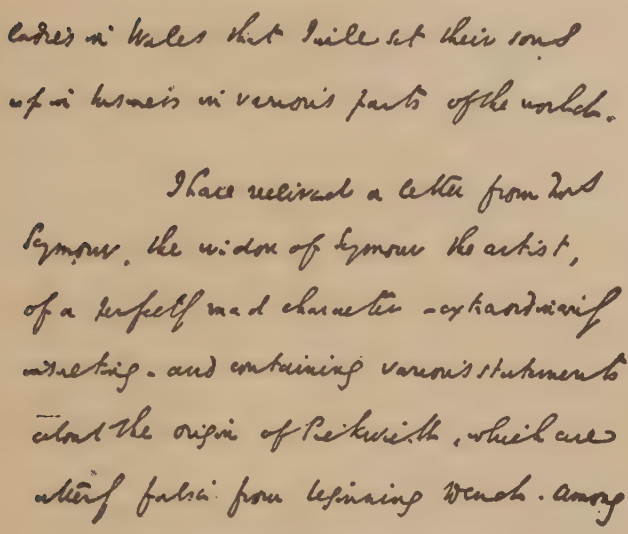
early months *Pickwick* was "a signal failure," and adds details: "Charles Tilt, at that time a publisher of considerable eminence, made extraordinary exertions, out of friendship for Messrs. Chapman and Hall, to insure its success. He sent out, on what is called sale or return, to all parts of the provinces, no fewer than fifteen hundred copies of each of the first five numbers. This gave the 'Pickwick Papers' a very extensive publicity, yet Mr. Tilt's only result was an average sale of about fifty copies of each of the five parts. A certain number of copies sold, of course, through other channels." Mr. Grant erred in the detail of the number of copies sent out. It is certain that not more than four hundred copies of each of the early numbers were printed. There is, however, no reason to doubt his estimate of the sale. It is not likely that more than fifty copies were disposed of "through other channels"; a grand total of one hundred copies sold seems a charitable estimate.

Well before Mr. Tilt had any bad news to disseminate, the marriage of Charles Dickens and Catherine Hogarth was duly solemnized on April second. After a brief honeymoon they returned to the quarters in Furnival's Inn, which, it is to be hoped, Catherine immediately provided with a carpet. The second number of *Pickwick* was probably already in the printer's hands when, on the morning of the twenty-first, Charles's brother Frederick knocked at the door while the couple still slept to tell them the morning papers declared that Robert Seymour, tieing a string to the trigger of a fowling piece at a summer house in the garden of his Islington home, had faced the muzzle, pulled the string, and made it forever impossible for the world to learn an essential version of one of the great

literary puzzles of the Victorian era. The tragedy was not without its bibliographic importance; Part II of a perfect *Pickwick* must contain the slip giving the melancholy reason for the presence of only three plates instead of the intended four.

The extent of Dickens's debt to Seymour for the conception of *Pickwick* has often been matter for debate—the argument, in fact, flared to varying heights of acrimoniousness on several occasions during Dickens's lifetime. He was always intensely annoyed by these attacks, which of course proves nothing—humanity reacts more sharply to the smart of injustice than to the tickle of conscience. *Pickwick* is Dickens's, and no impressive claim has yet been put forward to render a contrary view admissible. His bitterest opponent on this score was Seymour's widow, for whom one may entertain the keenest sympathy without in the least forgetting that her plea was inevitably ex parte. She wrote him, as long as thirteen years after the alleged injury, a letter which Dickens described as "of a perfectly mad character—extraordinarily insulting—and containing various statements about the origin of Pickwick, which are utterly false from beginning to end." Five years later, in 1854, Mrs. Seymour published a scathing pamphlet on the subject which it is believed was suppressed by the good offices of her friends—at all events only two copies of the original issue are known to exist today.

The situation created by the suicide of Seymour was certainly without parallel in the history of publishing. The book had been planned as a series of illustrations—of Pickwick pictures rather than of Pickwick papers. The author had stood firm for a more equitable division of



MR. DICKENS ASSERTS HIMSELF

Part of the letter wherein the author rebutted Mrs. Seymour's claims

effort and accent. The artist, for whatever reason, had removed himself from the duumvirate. If the publication was to continue, the author must inevitably dominate it, whoever the artist might be. But an artist there had to be. Chapman and Hall instituted a frantic search, and finally decided on R. W. Buss.

Buss's connection with *Pickwick* proved as unfortunate, though hardly so tragic, as Seymour's had been. His is the dimmest star in the bright constellation of Dickens illustrators, from Cruikshank to Fildes. It is generally and all too readily assumed that he was a hopeless incompetent who must have wandered into the *Pickwick* scene by some ludicrous accident, like a cat walking across a stage at a critical moment in a dramatic performance. He was, on the contrary, a talented and experienced draughtsman, and

it was only the fact that he was wholly ignorant of the art of reproducing his work on metal that made his connection with *Pickwick* so brief. For in those days publishers did not merely mark a dimension on an original drawing, send it to a photo-engraver and then sit back and wait for the cut. Either the artist did his own engraving or else an engraver was employed who perforce was himself an artist, since the etching had to be made by hand.

The notice of Robert William Buss in the *Dictionary of National Biography* occupies half a column, but there is no mention of his connection with *Pickwick*. Forster's compendious life of Dickens, published a generation later during the five-year interval between Dickens's death and Buss's, accorded Buss one sentence: "There was at first a little difficulty in replacing Seymour, and for a single number Mr. Buss was interposed." George Gissing's otherwise admirable one-volume abridgment of Forster reproduces this sentence verbatim save for the added injury of substituting "a Mr. Buss" for plain "Mr. Buss."

The injustice of Forster's casual and patronizing allusion was pardonably annoying to the old artist. Buss was not the type, however, that fulminates in letters to the *Times;* instead he prepared an apologia in the form of a simple narrative which would make his position clear to his children. According to this document, it was Hall who called on Buss and explained the emergency that had been brought about by the death of Seymour. "Taken quite by surprise," Buss recorded, "I told him I had never in the whole course of my life had an etching needle in my hand, and that I was entirely ignorant of the process of etching, as far as practice was concerned. He assured me

it was very easy to do, and that with my talent I was sure to succeed."

Accustomed to working in chalk and pencil, Buss had to shift quickly to ink. In three weeks he was ready to start etching his first plate. "Of course it was full of faults," he explained, "inevitable to any one in the early stage of practice in etching. But it was shown to Messrs. Chapman and Hall, and approved by them, though not as one of the illustrations to be published. All this occupied much time, which was every hour becoming more and more valuable, as the date of the publication was close at hand. I had barely time to prepare my two subjects for the next number of 'Pickwick' in pencil and submit them for approval to the publishers, who returned them, being much pleased with my efforts." They had told him at the outset that due allowance would be made for his lack of experience as an etcher.

Buss then set about etching his plates, with disastrous results. There was only one thing to be done—turn the originals over to an engraver and hope for the best. "This work he did very well indeed," Buss continued, "but, as might have been expected, had I had time for thought, the free touch of an original was entirely wanting. The etching itself failed, but the 'biting-in' was admirably done. Time was up. The plates must be placed at once in the printer's hands, and so (there being no help for it) the plates were printed, the numbers stitched and duly published. Thus my name appeared to designs of which not one touch of mine was on the plates." The artist was busy on the drawings for the next number when he received a note from Chapman and Hall stating that another hand would complete the task. So vanished Buss from

THE CRICKET MATCH

The first of the two suppressed Buss plates

the *Pickwick* scene, leaving behind him two plates (for which he received thirty shillings), the cricket match and the arbor incident wherein the fat boy was for once awake, each marked "Drawn and etch'd by R. W. Buss" (even though he had nothing to do with the etching). The two Buss plates appeared in only a few copies of Part III before new etchings were substituted, and these two plates, despite their defects, are as two great clusters of diamonds to the Dickens collector. For of all the "twenty parts in nineteen" that constitute *Pickwick*, the earliest issue of

THE ARBOR SCENE

The second suppressed Buss plate

Part III with the Buss plates is by far the most difficult to come by.

How much, if anything, Dickens had to do with the casting aside of Buss is not known. There is no indication that they ever met, either during the great *Pickwick* crisis or afterward. Certainly, in the years that followed, Buss

bore Dickens no rancor. Of his many subject paintings (he also achieved success as a portraitist) several depict scenes from Dickens's later novels, and Buss's final picture, left unfinished at his death in 1875, was a fine study entitled "A Dream of Dickens," showing the novelist asleep in a chair in the familiar study at Gad's Hill, a few feet before his desk, while shadowy elfin outlines of his best-known characters people the air about him.

The Buss débâcle was followed by another desperate hunt for an illustrator. News of the search was current in the profession, and a number of artists applied for the place—the fact is of interest mainly because one of them happened to be William Makepeace Thackeray. The choice fell on Hablôt K. Browne. The harness mate who was to help carry *Pickwick* through to triumph had been found —and not *Pickwick* alone, but *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *Dombey and Son*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit* and *A Tale of Two Cities* as well. To jibe with Boz, Browne adopted the sobriquet Phiz. That name, however, did not appear on the green wrapper. Parts IV to XIX-XX inclusive (and later issues of the first three parts) bore the line "With Illustrations" but named no artist—Chapman and Hall were taking no chances. Seymour's original design for the wrapper, however, was employed throughout.

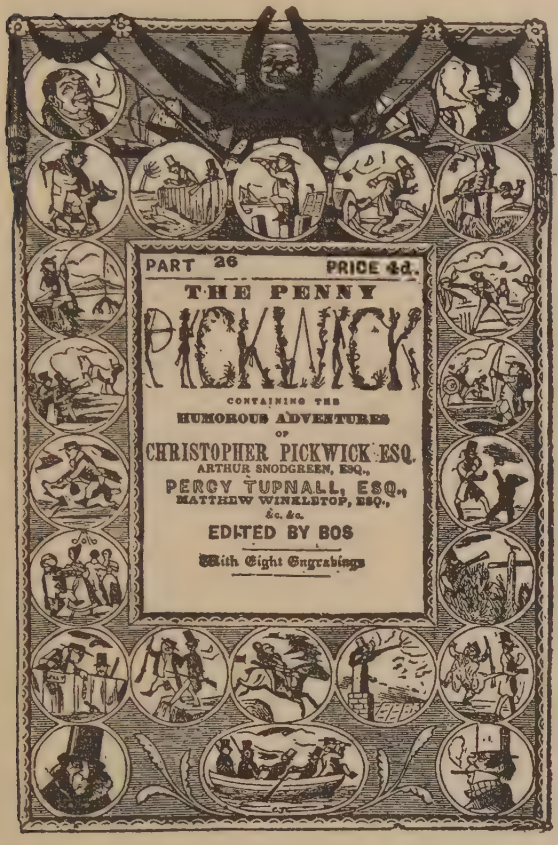
But the mere importation of another artist was not enough to make things lively for the promoting Mr. Tilt. The fourth number of *Pickwick*—the first in which Phiz's talents had full play—sold little better than the first. Likewise the fifth. But in that same fifth number was laid the fuse that was to explode *Pickwick* to all corners of the English-speaking world. That fuse made its ap-

BOZ, BY PHIZ

Hablôt K. Browne's version of the creator of Pickwick

pearance "habited in a coarse striped waistcoat, with black calico sleeves, and blue glass buttons, drab breeches, and leggings; a bright red handkerchief was wound in a very loose and unstudied style round his neck; and an old white hat was carelessly thrown on his head." Under the hat was Sam Weller.

Mr. Tilt, if there was any sporting blood in his makeup (and there doubtless was), must certainly have taken off his own hat to Mr. Weller as a circulation getter. From Part VI on the figures multiplied miraculously, and *Pickwick* concluded its serial career with a circulation of forty thousand copies. In the light of today this figure looks gratifying but hardly sensational. In 1837, however, it constituted a record, and Forster is not exaggerating the impression the statistics created when he calls them "almost fabulous." Pickwick hats, cigars, canes and coats came into being overnight; the work was pirated, imitated, adapted, anthologized, continued, transplanted, reillustrated, and dramatized (for the first time as early as October, 1836). And if the "fabulous" forty thousand appears actually not fabulous at all, let there be taken into consideration the fact, stressed by John C. Eckel of Philadelphia, most painstaking of Dickens bibliographers, that since its original appearance *Pickwick* has come to stand "fourth and perhaps third among the English printed books, being exceeded in the point of circulation only by the Bible, Shakespeare's works, and some say the English Prayer Book." Striking from the total, as one may properly do, those persons who have not read Shakespeare, the Bible and the Prayer Book entire, it is thoroughly safe to exalt *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* to an unique eminence of popularity.



IN THE WAKE OF PICKWICK POPULARITY

One of the many imitations of the serial triumph whose sponsors tried to ride to fame and fortune by clinging to Boz's coat-tails

III

Mr. Pickwick and company did not have to wait long for their introduction to an American audience. The famous Philadelphia firm of Carey, Lea & Blanchard "ventured to reprint" the first four numbers in November,

1836. The issue was completed by December, 1837, only a month after the conclusion of the original English serialization. It appeared in five volumes—boards, cloth back, and paper label reading *The Pickwick Club. Edited by "Boz"*—and without illustrations. Henry C. Lea of the firm, who was only eleven years old when the first volume appeared (he entered the publishing house six years afterward, and eventually became its head), gave some interesting details of the enterprise thirty years later:

> The author was then unknown, and the enterprise a doubtful one; so the edition printed from type was only 1500 copies, and the numbers were issued at the price of 45 cents, in one volume, in thin duodecimo shape, bound in boards, with which all readers of old novels are doubtless familiar. The venture was successful, and by December, 1837, when the fifth and concluding volume was published, the edition had been materially increased, while small quantities of the earlier volumes had been reprinted, and two rival and cheaper editions had been started in New York. The only advantage which the author derived from this publication, beyond the reputation which the name "Boz" acquired in this country, was a remittance of 50 pounds, made to him in 1838 by the house in acknowledgment of the success of his work. That success had led in 1837 to the publication of the collected "Sketches by Boz," of which but 1250 copies were printed. This does not seem to have been a fortunate undertaking, for I find no trace of another edition being called for until many years afterward, when we included it in a collected edition of the works.

Commenting on this last statement in his *First and Early American Editions of the Works of Charles Dickens,* William Glyde Wilkins declares that "Mr. Lea's memory must have been at fault," for "there were no less than four editions of the 'Sketches' published by his firm."

The Philadelphia *Pickwick*, therefore, was assuredly a conspicuous success, not alone in itself, but also by reason of the impetus it imparted to the *Sketches*. It is now a scarce book. In 1838 James Turney of New York brought out a *Pickwick* in twenty-six parts in green paper wrappers.

Mr. Pickwick and his associates, and in particular the younger Mr. Weller, also proved an enormous success on the contemporary American stage. Some of these renditions were so crudely farcical (a quality which they shared with the posters announcing the entertainments) that an impressive segment of the population for some time held aloof from a perusal of the "reform" novels which followed on the heels of *Pickwick*. An intensely serious youth named Charles Edwards Lester shared this view, and was man enough to admit it. But *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby* won him (a friend lent him *Oliver* "to help while away a night of illness," and Lester got Dickens the way many people have got religion) and when, a year or two later, he went abroad (the result was a two-volume semi-sociological study called *The Glory and the Shame of England*) he called on Dickens and wrote a detailed account of his visit. This was in July, 1840, and Lester's description of Dickens's personal appearance four years after the inception of *Pickwick* is worth reproducing:

> I think Dickens incomparably the finest-looking man I ever saw. The portrait of him in the Philadelphia edition of his works is a good one; but no picture can do justice to his expression when he is engaged in an interesting conversation. There is something about his eyes at such times which cannot be copied. In person he is perhaps a little above the standard height; but his bearing is noble, and he appears taller than he really is. His figure is very

graceful, neither too slight nor too stout. The face is handsome. His complexion is delicate—rather pale generally; but when his feelings are kindled his countenance is overspread with a rich glow. I presume he is somewhat vain of his hair, and he can be pardoned for it too. It reminded me of words in Sidney's Arcadia: "His fair auburn hair, which he wore in great length, gave him at that time a most delightful show." His forehead, a phrenologist would say (especially if he knew his character beforehand), indicates a clear and beautiful intellect, in which the organs of perception, mirthfulness, ideality, and comparison, predominate. I should think his nose had once been almost determined to be Roman, but hesitated just long enough to settle into the classic Grecian outline.

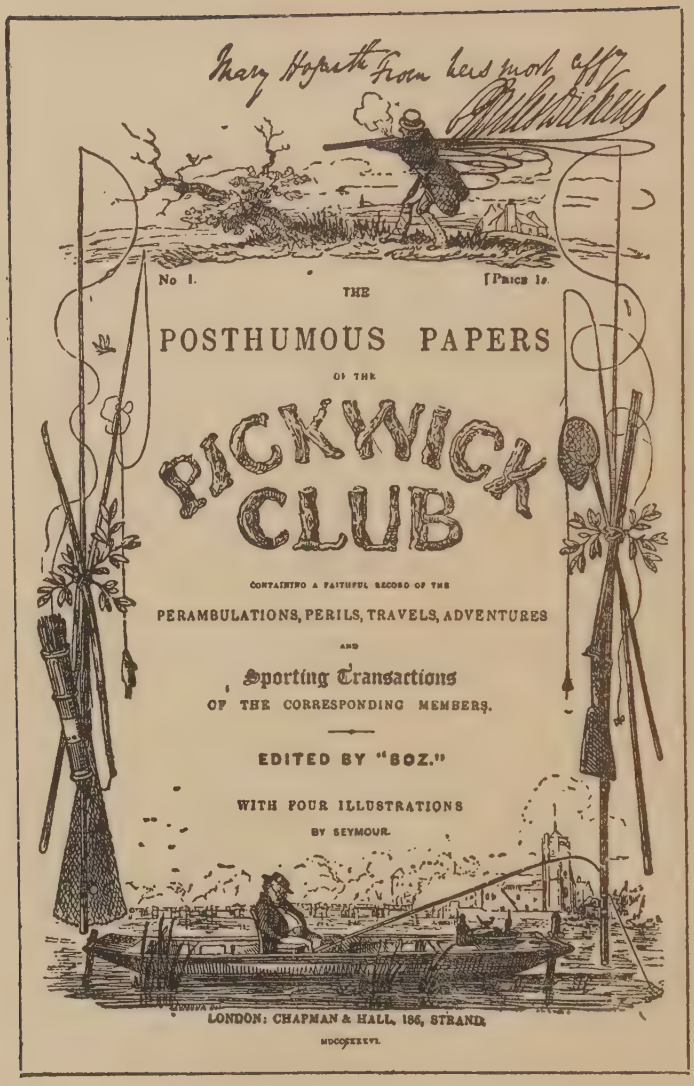
IV

Pickwick had become a collector's item, and a scarce one, before the death of Dickens. In his *Hints to Dickens Collectors* (1870) John F. Dexter declared that "a fine copy in parts" had not been sold for fifteen years. "It would doubtless realize," he added, "from fifteen to twenty pounds." Charles Plumptre Johnson, in his *Hints to Collectors of the Works of Charles Dickens* (1885), more conservatively estimated the value at from ten to fifteen pounds. Mr. Eckel's bibliography, published in 1913, cites the then record price of $1450 made five years earlier. In May, 1914, a copy "regarded as the finest extant," according to the correspondent who cabled the *New York Times* about it, realized nearly £500 at Sotheby's. On April 21, 1926, just ninety years from the day Dickens learned of the death of Seymour, the George Barr McCutcheon copy sold at the American Art Galleries in New York for $7000. On December 7, 1927, the Thomas Hatton copy was auctioned at the same place for

$16,300. And on January 8, 1929, the Jerome Kern copy sold at the Anderson Galleries in the same city for $28,000.

To what fresh height will the next perfect copy to be offered soar? The reader is at liberty to make his own estimate. Let him remember that of perfect *Pickwicks* fewer copies survive than of the First Folio Shakespeare. *Pickwick*, indeed, is of that fastidious inner circle of rare books which are of such vast collecting import as to merit a census. Mr. Eckel accomplished the task in *Prime Pickwicks in Parts* (1928), wherein he gives the history and present whereabouts of the fourteen known copies of the book that have some claim to the designation perfect. Thirteen of these are in the United States, and one is in England.

The most desirable *Pickwick* in existence, however, is not one of this exclusive group of fourteen, though Mr. Eckel properly does not omit a description of it. It lacks several of the eleven bibliographic points which represent Pickwickian perfection—to wit, that all the covers must bear the date MDCCCXXXVI, that the plates in Parts I to XII must be without captions, and nine other related technical advantages—but on the front wrapper of each of the first fourteen parts is an inscription by Dickens conveying it to his adored sister-in-law, Mary Hogarth. The cessation of the inscriptions was owing to the tragedy of Mary Hogarth's death, which occurred suddenly on May 7, 1837, in her eighteenth year, when *Pickwick* was already a triumph. The shock was so severe that Dickens found himself unable to complete the June number on schedule. Its issue, accordingly, was postponed until July. Harry B. Smith of New York, whose since



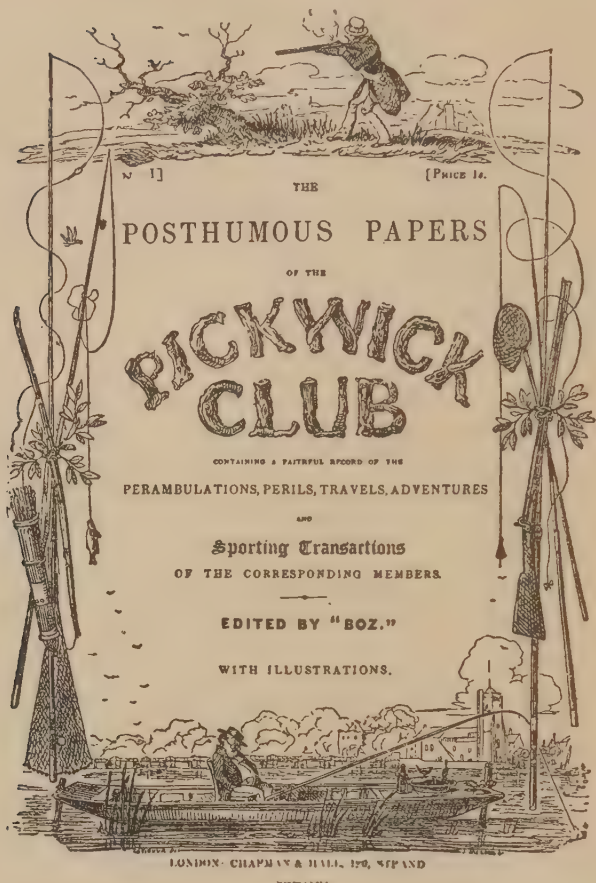
THE MOST VALUABLE PICKWICK

Each of the first fourteen parts (the wrapper of Part I is shown here) is inscribed to Dickens's sister-in-law, Mary Hogarth, who died before the serial issue was completed

dispersed "sentimental library" comprised the most remarkable group of association books ever brought together, bought this copy of *Pickwick* at Sotheby's in London in 1896 for the then breath-taking figure of one hundred pounds. It is now the property of William L. Elkins of Philadelphia, who, should he ever care to part with it, would find plenty of eager takers at much more than one hundred times that figure. This copy of *Pickwick* is by all odds the most valuable book published during the nineteenth century.

Only one other presentation *Pickwick* in parts is known. It is not of the earliest issue, and only one part is inscribed —the first text page of Part I. It was presented to "Mrs. Johns from hers very faithfully Charles Dickens," and if the donor had inscribed a few other parts (or, by preference, all the others) and if he had selected first issues, it would have brought far, far more than the $3600 paid for it at the Kern sale. At the same sale a copy of the first popular edition (1847) inscribed to Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, to whom the issue was dedicated, brought $2300; a little more than four years earlier, at the William Harris Arnold sale, the same copy had sold for $700.

Only a few fragments of the manuscript of *Pickwick* survive. Until late in 1928 it was believed that only thirty-two quarto pages comprising Chapters XXXV and XXXVI were still in existence. All but a single leaf of these two chapters is now in the collection of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach of Philadelphia. The missing leaf, as Dr. Rosenbach relates in *Books and Bidders*, was given to the British Museum by a former owner of the manuscript, W. A. White. At the end of 1928, however, two additional



The wrappers of later issues of Pickwick *announced the work as "with illustrations" but named no illustrator*

fragments appeared at auction a week apart, one in Philadelphia and one in London. The Philadelphia fragment consisted of one and a half pages from Chapter XLIII signed by the author in his own name and as Boz. It had formed part of the collection of George W. Childs, maker of the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, and was probably

copied out for Mr. Childs, who was Dickens's host on his second visit to America in 1868. The London fragment—five pages—formed part of Chapter XXXVIII. It sold for £7500—the Childs fragment brought $9000. There is a possibility, of course, that other morsels of *Pickwick* may survive, but it is extremely remote. If any more do exist, a market quotation of around thirty dollars a word ought to provide a sufficient inducement to bring them to public notice if not to public sale.

This matter of Pickwickian values recalls the necessity of saying a final word on the financial side of the business as it affected the author himself. That fourteen pounds a part began, soon after Mr. Weller's appearance, to look pretty confiscatory. An adjustment was eventually made that netted Dickens some £2500 and a share in the copyright after five years, this share being made contingent on the production of "a new work of a similar character"—the new work, of quite a different character, proved to be *Nicholas Nickleby*. Chapman and Hall had become a going concern. So had Charles Dickens.

IZAAK WALTON AND *THE COMPLEAT ANGLER*

I

OF all the twelve Apostles, the most lovable, because the most human, was Simon Peter. He could not only tell a lie, but he could repeat it, and repeat it again.

Peter was a fisherman, and fishing and falsehood have been coupled in the mind of man ever since the first man failed to spear the first fish. There is a vast literature of fishing, the English branch of which literature began before the dawn of the sixteenth century, and English books published before 1501 are not tremendously numerous—a representative library thereof would cost better than a small fortune and involve the assembler in a remarkable series of burglaries, but it would not require much shelf-age. Wynkyn de Worde, who succeeded his master William Caxton, father of English printing, and whose name, with its fine Flemish alliterative sequence, sounds like that of a character out of Eugene Field, published in 1496 a second edition of *The Book of St. Albans*, originally issued ten years earlier—a work that derives its name from the place of publication, and is not concerned with theology but with the pleasures of the chase. To the 1496 edition was added a *Treatyse of Fysshynge Wyth an Angle*—that is, an angle worm—and there is a woodcut of a gentle-

man (presumably) hauling in an unresisting unit of marine life to deposit alongside two of its brethren in a container that is unquestionably a washtub, the mere presence of which receptacle is one of history's most impressive manifestations of optimism. But that attribute, too, is part of every fisherman's equipment.

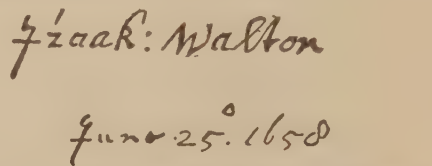
Not quite a century was to elapse before the most famous fisherman outside the Scriptures entered the world

EARLY TUDOR ANGLING

From The Book of St. Albans, *printed by Wynkyn de Worde, Caxton's successor, in 1496*

and found it a goodly place. Too little is known about him, but the lack is all in his favor. That Izaak Walton was born in Stafford in 1593, and that he went up to London in 1613 and became a merchant, is certain. History does not record, unfortunately, what his line was, but the very omission is ample proof of his commercial integrity, which, after all, is more important than whether

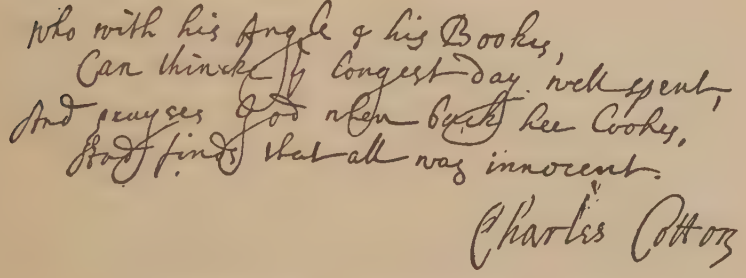
he dealt in linen or iron. In 1643, at the age of fifty, he returned to Stafford to become the best-known retired business man in English literature. Ten years later he published a book about fishing. It was called *The Compleat Angler, or The Contemplative Man's Recreation*, and it has survived hardily not as a technical monograph on fishing but for the pleasant light it throws on the spirit of the contemplative man who wrote it.



This was not, however, Walton's ealiest literary venture. In 1640 he had written a life of Dr. John Donne to serve as introduction to a collection of his sermons—Walton, as a Fleet Street merchant, had been one of the doctor's parishioners. In 1651 he had performed a somewhat similar service for Sir Henry Wotton, and later, in the leisure of old age, he wrote brief biographies of Richard Hooker, George Herbert and Bishop Sanderson. He died in 1683, ninety years old, having lived through the most critical period of English history without loss of equanimity. Those were times that tried men's souls—all men's souls save Izaak Walton's. At the age of eighty-seven he ventured so far into the field of political controversy as to publish two anonymous letters "written from a quiet and conformable citizen of London to two busie and factious shopkeepers in Coventry." He did not happen to be living in London at the time, but it mattered not—whereever and in whatever era he might have lived, he would never have been otherwise than quiet and conformable.

II

The Compleat Angler as originally published was singularly incomplete in comparison with the book of the same title as it is known today. It contained only 246 pages of text as against 355 in the second edition of 1655. The fifth edition, 1676, the last published during Walton's lifetime, has been the basis of virtually all later editions, and for this the services of Charles Cotton were brought into play. Walton himself was a competent but not an expert fisherman; he knew enough of the art and science of angling to be conscious of his own limitations,



Concluding lines of Cotton's tribute to Walton

and he had sufficient strength of character and of intellect to appreciate the occasional ability of a puppy to teach an old dog new tricks.

Walton was thirty-seven when Cotton was born; he was sixty-two when they met, in the year of the second edition of *The Compleat Angler*. Three years after the meeting Cotton's father died, leaving the son an estate in Derbyshire so gloriously encumbered that Charles appears never to have quite cast off the last of the legal bur-

dens imposed with his inheritance. Throughout his life, however (he died in 1687, four years after Walton), these difficulties seem to have troubled Cotton no whit. He translated the classics, wrote parodies and burlesques, rhymed and fished. For the 1676 *Angler* he wrote some "Instructions how to angle for a Trout or Grayling, in a clear stream," and won thereby an immortality that is never likely to be accorded his rowdy travesties.

Of the friendship that linked these two great lovers of wind and cloud and water we know far too little, and the fault is mainly Cotton's. What an opportunity was his to anticipate Boswell by a century and to give the world a portrait that might have endured as sturdily as the *Angler* itself! Perhaps, at the end, the assaults of the law upon this land-ridden gentleman broke in severely upon his time even if they could not break his spirit, and left him no leisure to set down the story of his "dear and most worthy friend."

The original issue of *The Compleat Angler* was "printed by T. Maxey for Richard Marriott"; the book probably sold for eighteen pence. Possibly the copy was marked "Rush"; at any rate Mr. Maxey did rush it, or else his was an uncommonly slovenly print shop. The page numbers for pages 69 to 80, inclusive, got into print with the folios 69, 80, 81, 72, 37, 84, 85, 76, 77, 88, 89, 80. Just why the Maxey shop should have chosen that particular dozen to run amuck in, and done it so triumphantly, is one of the inexplicable mysteries of print. But worse was to come. On page 245, in the concluding couplet of some quoted "Verses that be worthy to keep a room in every man's memory" (verses by Walton's long dead friend Dr. Donne)—

And if contentment be a stranger, then
I'l nere look for it, but in heaven again—

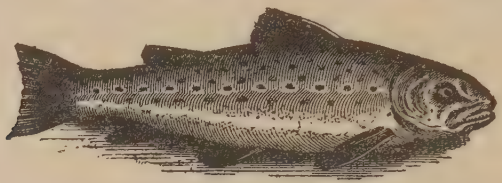
occurred a mistake that was almost too ingenious to have been consciously made—almost too ingenious to be other than a mistake. For one of Mr. Maxey's staff contrived to substitute the word "contention" for "contentment"—possibly a far-seeing compositor who knew that the book would one day be far more valuable with the "contention" than with the "contentment" reading, as it assuredly is.

This same page (245) provides another key point to a perfect, or nearly perfect, *Angler*. Most books of that day, and of many later days, have come down to the present with the edges of the leaves trimmed by the binder. The distinction between cut and uncut copies of any book is the first morsel of technical knowledge acquired by the book collector; of non-collectors, one hundred out of one hundred assume—nay, are convinced—that the term "uncut" signifies that the leaves have never been separated for reading, which condition is described by the term unopened. An unopened book is always an uncut book (for it were cut it would necessarily be opened), but an opened book is not necessarily a cut book. A good binder does not trim the edges of a book entrusted to his hands more than he has to, but some binders have always taken a gluttonous delight in paring the edges to the quick. Just above the middle of page 245 of the first *Angler* appears the line

These guests, these Courts, my soul most dearly loves,

and this all but unbroken sequence of monosyllabic words reaches out a good fat two ems beyond any other line on the page. In rebinding first *Anglers* most exponents of

the art have clipped off either the comma or a fragment of the final word in addition. Copies in which the entire line "drags its slow length along" can legitimately be classified as large, and are more valuable than copies in which the binder has wrought more extensive havoc.



The Trout, as pictured in the original Compleat Angler

To the casual inspector of the *Angler* there is another business which is momentarily confusing, and which will seem to him to exemplify still another shortcoming of Mr. Maxey's establishment. On pages 216 and 217 appear the words and music of "The Angler's Song," the treble part on page 216 and the bass on page 217. Page 217 is printed upside down. This, however, was by design. Treble and bass were supposed to stand facing each other and bellow each past the other's right ear; the device apparently was deemed more ingeniously convenient than the more obvious and modern plan of permitting them to stand side by side—or of giving each a copy of the book.

No exact census of the number of copies of the 1653 *Angler* now in existence has ever been made. The *Fishing Gazette* (London) for December 22, 1928, presented the best available information on this point and at the same time inaugurated a roll-call of *Anglers* which, while it may require many years for completion, is eminently worth making:

How many copies of the first edition have survived the wear and tear of 275 years? It is an interesting speculation. We imagined there could hardly be many more than a dozen, and consequently were considerably astonished when, on putting the question to one of the leading antiquarian booksellers—Mr. Chatto, of Messrs. Pickering and Chatto—he estimated the number at about fifty; twenty of which he reckoned might be found in this country and the remainder in America. . . . It should not be an impossible task to discover where the majority of first editions are, and to trace the variations that exist. As a nucleus to start a list of the first editions there are the British Museum copy, the Bodleian copy, Mr. Arthur N. Gilbey's copy, and the late Mr. R. B. Marston's copy. In addition to the Grenville copy we believe the British Museum has two more copies, both in poor condition. This brings the number up to six. If anyone can tell us of other copies in this country we will be greatly obliged, and would also appreciate information of copies in America or other parts of the world. It would not surprise us to learn that there are more copies in America than in this country.

III

The Compleat Angler and its author are notable for a pair of ingenious spellings which have confused or delighted, or both confused and delighted, thousands among English speaking peoples. The spelling "compleat" has endeared itself especially to those whose conception of romance is a luncheon at Ye Coffee Shoppe and a dinner at Ye Olde Inne, and who are always taken slightly aback on learning that "ye" is pronounced "the." As a matter of fact, the spelling "compleat" occurs exactly once in each of the four editions under the original title published during Walton's lifetime. That once is on the engraved title page. On page one of the text the title reads *The*

Being a Diſcourſe of

FISH and FISHING,

Not unworthy the peruſal of moſt *Anglers.*

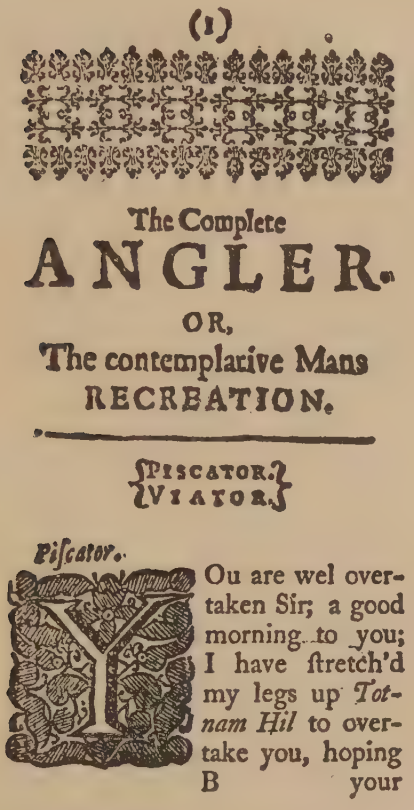
Simon Peter *ſaid, I go a fiſhing: and they ſaid, We alſo wil go with thee.* John 21 3.

London, Printed by *T. Maxey* for RICH. MARRIOT, in S. *Dunſtans* Church-yard Fleetſtreet, 1653.

TITLE PAGE, FIRST EDITION

With the "Compleat" spelling

Complete Angler, and thus it reads in the running heads throughout the book. It was a day in which virtually any grouping of letters that made recognizable the word in the writer's mind served the purpose as well as another. The spelling "compleat" in the beautiful cartouche on the title page could not be altered, of course, short of having the plate re-engraved. If author, printer or publisher had raised any objection there was certainly plenty of time to


(1)

The Complete

ANGLER.

OR,

The contemplative Mans

RECREATION.

PISCATOR.
VIATOR.

Piſcator.

YOu are wel overtaken Sir; a good morning to you; I have ſtretch'd my legs up *Totnam Hil* to overtake you, hoping

B your

FIRST TEXT PAGE, FIRST EDITION

With the "Complete" spelling

make the change between editions; the fact that no change was made is reasonable evidence that nobody was sufficiently concerned about the business to suggest an alteration. Yet Walton is known to have been pleasantly particular about the correctness of his text, and considering the manner in which the original issue of *The Compleat Angler* was mangled, he might have been much less exact-

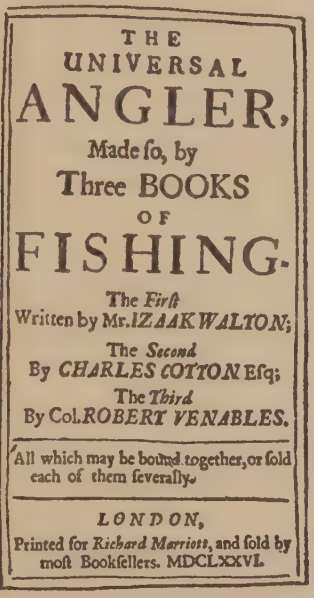
ing than he actually was and still have had good ground for complaint.

The "compleat" form of the adjective was common in the seventeenth century and through most of the eighteenth, but its use was far from universal. The two variants seem to have divided honors about equally in Walton's time. In the days of the great Elizabethans the word was often accented on the first syllable, and it is possible that Walton so pronounced it.

Only less puzzlingly attractive is Walton's manner of spelling his first name. The regulation form of the name Isaac in the seventeenth century was Isaac—there was much greater unanimity in the orthography of proper terms than of their vulgar brethren. Izaak Walton was christened Isaac Walton—there is no question about it. The alteration was his own doing—a pleasant little aberration of individuality from which he apparently derived an innocent pleasure. As a piece of unconscious press-agentry the shift was admirable. Isaac Walton, Izaak Walton—need one hesitate an instant in making choice between them? Posterity has done well to humor his little crotchet.

The Compleat Angler was far from an unsuccessful book in the early years of its history, but it enjoyed nothing like the popularity that twenty-five years later was to characterize the appearance of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and, nearly fifty years later still, of *Robinson Crusoe*. The most striking indication of this fact is that no rival publisher paid it the compliment of pirating it. The book, as has been noted, travelled placidly through five editions during Walton's lifetime—and Walton lived for thirty years after the appearance of the first edition.

Thereafter no new edition appeared for nearly three-quarters of a century—a condition certainly unique among books that have become authentic classics. It remained for Moses Browne, in 1750, to give *The Compleat Angler* a lease of life that will never know


THE
UNIVERSAL
ANGLER,
Made ſo, by
Three BOOKS
OF
FISHING.
The *Firſt*
Written by Mr. *IZAAK WALTON*;
The *Second*
By *CHARLES COTTON* Eſq;
The *Third*
By Col. *ROBERT VENABLES*.
All which may be bound together, or ſold each of them ſeverally.
LONDON,
Printed for *Richard Marriott*, and ſold by moſt Bookſellers. MDCLXXVI.

Title page of the first complete Compleat Angler, *with the Cotton and Venables additions*

diminishing. Browne, as the author of *Piscatory Eclogues* (who today ever heard of them?), knew Walton as all cultivated and many uncultivated fishermen of that day knew him. His little treatise was already difficult to obtain, though Browne reported that it was frequently asked for. So Browne prepared a new edition, using the text of the fifth, and practically every edition since that

day, with the exception of facsimile reprints of the original edition, has followed him at least to the extent of combining the Walton and Cotton contributions as a single unit.

The second Browne edition (properly designated, on the title-page, the seventh edition of the work in all forms) was published in 1759; another followed in 1772. Meanwhile in 1760 had been issued the first edition edited by Sir John Hawkins, who might have become the best known contemporary biographer of Samuel Johnson if James Boswell had never been born. Other Hawkins editions followed at intervals of a few years—1766, 1775, 1784, 1791 (reissued in 1792), and 1797—six in all before 1800. Browne, as was noted, numbered his three editions from the first appearance of the book (except that the original Browne edition had no edition designation on the title-page). The Hawkins editions that followed the first Hawkins edition are numbered in rotation on the basis of the original Hawkins edition. The resulting jumble of figures is highly confusing, and a brief recapitulation of all editions from 1653 to the end of the eighteenth century may be helpful:

1653 First edition
1655 Second edition
1661 Third edition
1664 Third edition (reissue)
1668 Fourth edition
1676 Fifth (complete) edition
1750 Sixth edition (first Browne)
1759 Seventh edition (second Browne)
1760 Eighth edition (first Hawkins)
1766 Ninth edition (second Hawkins)

1772 Tenth edition (third Browne)
1775 Eleventh edition (third Hawkins)
1784 Twelfth edition (fourth Hawkins)
1791 Thirteenth edition (fifth Hawkins)
1792 Thirteenth edition (fifth Hawkins, reissue)
1797 Fourteenth edition (sixth Hawkins)

The popularity of the Browne and Hawkins editions, particularly the latter, is immediately evident in the foregoing summary. Yet a larger share of the credit for lending fresh impetus to the book is due to Browne than to Hawkins. Browne tinkered slightly with the text, just as Jared Sparks attempted to improve on George Washington's letters, and is deserving of such anathemas as that serious offense demands. But let him not be denied full mead of praise for rediscovering Izaak Walton. The Hawkins issue, however, was a far more notable achievement as a fine editorial accomplishment, and virtually had the field to itself until 1836. Hawkins, it is interesting to note, also wrote the first life of Walton, and his interest in the man and his work was due directly to the suggestion of Dr. Johnson.

The nineteenth century, however, proved to be the heyday of the *Angler*. There is an abundance of Victorian and post-Victorian editions, many of them notable for competency of editing and beauty of typography, of which the collector must take account. The Major, Nicholas (Pickering), Marston, Lang, Dewar and Le Gallienne editions all have a collection value in their original and sometimes in their later forms. Nor has the twentieth century seen much abatement in the activity of producing the *Angler* in fresh and beautiful formats. The Riverside Press edition of 1909 is one of the most sought after of

books designed by Bruce Rogers, and 1928 saw the publication of a notable Merrymount Press edition.

IV

It is interesting to speculate concerning the reason why no American edition of *The Compleat Angler* was issued until the comparatively late date of 1847, while Abraham Lincoln was serving his only term in Congress, and when Grover Cleveland, the most devoted fisherman that ever gained the White House, was a boy of ten. Perhaps it was because in America's pioneer years angling, far from being "the contemplative man's recreation," was a serious commercial pursuit along the coast, and only an agreeable way to vary the rude frontier diet beside inland waters. At any rate, both Poe and Hawthorne were well inured to the arduous lot of letters before an *Angler* bearing an American imprint appeared, and this first Yankee *Angler* was put out by the very house which a few months earlier had published books by Poe and Hawthorne themselves. *The Raven and Other Poems* appeared in 1845, *Mosses from an Old Manse* in 1846, and *The Complete Angler* (note the spelling) in 1847, all with the imprint of Wiley and Putnam of 161 Broadway, New York. The New York *Angler* was edited by Dr. George Washington Bethune, who, ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1825 at the age of twenty, had gone over to the Reformed Dutch persuasion not long thereafter. Few if any of Dr. Bethune's own works are read today; they included *Lays of Love and Faith, Orations and Discourses, Fruits of the Spirit, The History of a Penitent,* and *Early Lost, Early Saved.* The doctor did well to edit an *Angler;* his claim

to immortality consists therein, and not in his tracts and sermons. He was, it hardly need be added, an enthusiastic fisherman. His *Angler* fared better than his lays and discourses; a second edition appeared in 1848 with the imprint of "John Wiley (Old Stand of 'Wiley and Putnam')," a third in 1852 (by which time John Wiley had abandoned the old stand and gone a few doors up Broadway to No. 167), and a fourth in 1866, which year found the peripatetic Mr. Wiley at 56 Walker Street. The house of Wiley (now become John Wiley & Sons) put out another edition, "with some additions and corrections from the Editor's Own Copy," in 1880, by which date several other American editions were in the field.

The Compleat Angler is one of the most widely copied titles ever devised, in which connection it is interesting to note that it was not itself the first book in English to be a "compleat" something or other. That honor appears due the memory of the author of *The Compleat Gentleman, Fashioning him absolute in the most necessary & commendable Qualities concerning Minde or Bodie, that may be required in a Noble Gentleman. By Henry Peacham. Mr. of Arts Sometime of Trinity Coll: in Cambridge* (London, 1622). The Peacham opus is not common; the Clawson copy brought $130 in 1926. It is worth far less than an *Angler* of 1653 perhaps because more of mankind has ever since been zealous rather for expertness with rod and line than for perfection in the ways of the courtier. The first "compleat" to follow the *Angler* was probably *The Compleat Collier, or the Whole Art of Sinking, Getting, and Working the Coal Mines, &c., as is now used in the Northern Parts* (London, 1708). The author of none of these three manuals, it is obvious, was

trying to be humorous, clever or "quaint" in his adoption of a title.

No copy of the first (1653) edition of *The Compleat Angler* has appeared at auction within a sufficiently recent period to make it possible to specify an accurate present-day valuation. Should a good copy occur it seems reasonable to hazard the view that it would not be dear at $10,000. The *Angler* is one of the few books of which it is safe to say that all early editions, and many later ones, are valuable, as a study of *American Book-Prices Current* makes apparent—during a recent auction season, for instance, copies of fifteen different editions were sold at prices ranging from $9 to $460.

The Compleat Angler enjoys the odd distinction of being probably the least translated of English classics. With the exception of a fragmentary adaptation in French, there appears to exist only a single translation—a German rendition, *Der Vollkommene Angler*, published at Hamburg in 1859. One compensating distinction, however, the *Angler* does enjoy. It is one of the few books in English that has a bibliography all to itself—Arnold Wood's exhaustive *Bibliography of "The Complete Angler"* (New York, 1900). It is interesting to note that Mr. Wood spells "complete" in the manner that Walton himself probably preferred to have it spelled.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE AND *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*

I

ON January 20, 1837, Dr. Calvin E. Stowe, professor of Biblical literature at Lane Seminary in Cincinnati, disembarked at New York from the ship *Gladiator*, just a day more than two months out of London. It had been a long voyage even for that preturbine era, and had doubtless given Dr. Stowe ample time to arrange his notes for his report on the educational systems of Europe (with particular emphasis on that model little country, the kingdom of Prussia) which he planned to submit to his seminary and to the State of Ohio. He had married a second wife little more than a year before, and the exigencies of his mission had compelled him to observe his wedding anniversary, as well as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day, on the high seas.

Arrived in New York, he was confronted with the intelligence that during his absence he had become the father of twin girls. The tiny ladies were doing nicely under the respective designations of Eliza and Isabella —the choice for the former was a touching tribute to Dr. Stowe's first wife, Eliza Tyler, who had been a dear friend of the twins' mother; for the latter, a testimonial to the bride's half sister. Now a baby's name ought to be pretty

well standardized in four months—two babies' names doubly so. But Dr. Stowe insisted on a voice in the business regardless of the time handicap. His daughters must confront life as Eliza Tyler Stowe and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Each must perpetuate the name of a cherished helpmate.

II

The little girls' mother—Harriet Beecher Stowe the elder—had been born Harriet Elizabeth Beecher twenty-six years before in the pleasant little hill village of Litchfield, Connecticut. Her arrival had tied the sex representation of the family at three all—the subsequent admission of two more brothers (one christened Henry Ward) gave the males a telling preponderance in a devout and pedagogical household. Hattie (as the family knew her) had early shown a bent toward literature of a sort. At the age of twelve she had read an original composition of some two thousand words at a Litchfield Academy "exhibition." It was called *Can the Immortality of the Soul Be Proved by the Light of Nature?* Here are two sentences from it: "The first argument which has been advanced to prove the immortality of the soul is drawn from the nature of the mind itself. It has (say the supporters of this theory) no composition of parts, and therefore, as there are no particles, is not susceptible of divisibility and cannot be acted upon by decay, and therefore if it will not decay it will exist forever."

In 1832 Hattie Beecher embarked on the much less metaphysical venture of a school geography. She finished it in 1833, after the family had moved to Cincinnati,

where her father had become president of Lane Seminary, and it was published by the local house of Corey, Fairbank & Webster. A year later she entered a fifty-dollar prize short-story contest sponsored by the *Western Monthly* and won—her story was called *Uncle Lot.* The editor of the *Monthly* may have appropriated the contest idea from the *Saturday Visiter* of Baltimore, which had just awarded a prize of the same amount to one Edgar Allan Poe for a story called *MS. Found in a Bottle.* Sundry periodical efforts followed, but various interruptions prevented complete devotion to writing—marriage, plans for her husband's journey, and the approach of the twins.

Beyond the domestic circle, too, there were disturbing elements to distract the mind from the pleasures of periodical composition. While Dr. Stowe was abroad he had received a letter from his wife describing the wrecking of the office of the *Philanthropist,* an anti-slavery paper, while numbers of prominent Cincinnatians held discreetly aloof from the proceedings. The editor of the *Philanthropist,* James G. Birney, had fared better than the Rev. E. P. Lovejoy of Alton, Illinois, editor of the *Observer* and a close friend of Harriet's brother Edward, whose presses had been thrice destroyed and himself at last murdered a few months before the Pinney affair. The slavery question had been agitating Harriet's soul since she was nine years old, when the passage of the Missouri Compromise Bill had aroused her father to a pitch of eloquence capable, she wrote later, of "drawing tears down the hardest faces of the old farmers in his congregation." Cincinnati had brought her within a river's breadth of the problem. Just across the Ohio the ownership of men by

men was part of the system; if the owned men got away, "we have never shrunk from the fugitives," Harriet wrote, "and we have helped them with all we had to give." Which, it may be added, was not much.

III

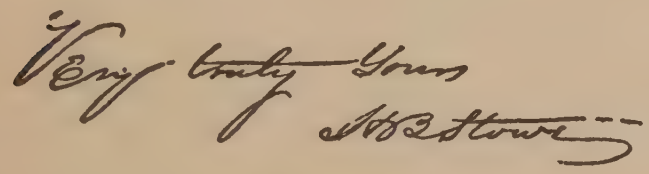
Despite the growth of family cares and the accumulating portents of the coming storm, Mrs. Stowe contrived to make of her writings an attractive little side line. It is not likely that, at this stage of her career, she dreamed of anything approaching fame. But Dr. Stowe dreamed it for her—and once more became good-naturedly dogmatic over the business of names.

"My dear," he wrote her when she was on a visit east in 1842, "you must be a literary woman. It is so written in the book of fate. Make all your calculations accordingly. Get a good stock of health and brush up your mind. Drop the E. out of your name. It only encumbers it and interferes with the flow and euphony. Write yourself fully and always Harriet Beecher Stowe, it is a name euphonious, flowing, and full of meaning. Then my word for it, your husband will lift up his head in the gate, and your children will rise up and call you blessed."

In 1843 Harpers published *The Mayflower*, a collection of periodical stories and sketches. It created no vast sensation, but it at least had the advantage of being more in line with the work of "a literary woman" than the Cincinnati geography of ten years before. Nine years more were to elapse before her third book appeared. However full the pulse of art may beat, one cannot tend six children

with one hand and turn out masterpieces with the other.

In the fall of 1849 Professor Stowe was called to the Collins professorship of natural and revealed religion at Bowdoin College. He had had an offer from New York of $2300 a year; Bowdoin offered only a thousand (Professor Stowe asked for a bonus of five hundred dollars), and "out of it," he declared, he must "hire my own house, at an expense of $75 or $100 a year." But the sentimental urge was overpowering. He was himself a Bowdoin man, a classmate of Franklin Pierce, who four years later would have his own renting troubles temporarily solved by taking up residence in the White House. In his college days the professor had spelled his name Stow, and it so ap-



pears in the *Catalogue of the Officers and Students at Bowdoin College and the Medical School of Maine* issued in February, 1824, the year of his graduation. The e was added sometime between 1824 and 1827, in which year he received his master's degree as Calvin E. Stowe. Both Pierce and Stowe, class of 1824, had doubtless once entertained the customary sophomoric sentiments of superiority toward Longfellow and Hawthorne, '25.

Mrs. Stowe preceded her husband on the journey east, taking three of the children with her and leaving the remaining three in his charge—an equitable arrangement.

In Brooklyn she spent a week with brother Henry, whose salary was $3300, and whose admiring congregation had just presented him with "a beautiful horse and carriage worth $600." Hattie was herself considering an outlay of $150 for furniture at the Brunswick home. "There is no doubt in my mind," she wrote the professor a few months later, "that our expenses this year will come to two hundred dollars, if not three, beyond our salary . . . I can earn four hundred dollars a year by writing, but I don't want to feel that I must, and when weary with teaching the children, and tending the baby, and buying provisions, and mending dresses, and darning stockings, sit down and write a piece for some paper."

This was written just before New Year's Day of 1851. Less than two months later came the inspiration that was to put an end to all concern over food, furniture and footgear. Pure inspiration it was if the term were ever applicable. In his biography of his mother Charles Edward Stowe records that while she was seated at a communion service in the college church, "suddenly, like the unrolling of a picture, the scene of the death of Uncle Tom passed before her mind. So strongly was she affected that it was with difficulty she could keep from weeping aloud. Immediately on returning home she took pen and paper and wrote out the vision which had been as it were blown into her mind as by the rushing of a mighty wind. Gathering her family about her she read what she had written. Her two little ones of ten and twelve years of age broke into convulsions of weeping, one of them saying through his sobs, 'Oh, mamma! Slavery is the most cruel thing in the world.' "

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

From the engraving by J. A. J. Wilcox after the drawing by Richmond

IV

With such zeal did she translate the unrolling picture into manuscript that, though still unfinished, it began to appear serially in the *National Era* of Washington in its issue of June 5, 1851. The *National Era* had been a leading vehicle of Abolitionist propaganda since the appearance of its first number on January 1, 1847. Its power and importance were due in large measure to the editorial genius of Gamaliel Bailey, who, obtaining his medical degree at the age of twenty-one, sailed as a ship's doctor to China, returned to edit the *Methodist Protestant* at Baltimore, became a hospital physician in Cincinnati, and re-entered journalism as associate of Birney on the *Philanthropist* in 1836. Following the attack on the *Philanthropist* office Bailey became sole editor of the paper, Birney devoting his efforts in the cause to addressing popular assemblies and legislative bodies in the free States. In 1840 and in 1844 Birney was the Abolitionist (Liberty Party) candidate for the Presidency. It is significant that while in the former year he received only 7369 votes, in 1844 his total was 62,263—more than enough to prevent James K. Polk from obtaining a clear majority of the popular vote; more than enough, had they been suitably distributed, to have prevented Polk's election. Birney's adherents claimed with considerable justice that the 1844 figure would have been much larger if enthusiastic and doubtless not disinterested supporters of Henry Clay had not circulated, three days before the election, copies of a forged letter wherein Birney was conveniently made to announce his withdrawal in favor of Clay. The ruse is credited with having given Clay Ohio and with having reduced Birney's

vote in New York, but not sufficiently to win New York and the Presidency for Clay.

The new Abolitionist organ was an important adjunct of the anti-slavery movement from the first. During the second year of its existence it won the compliment of being mobbed—the hostile cohorts, in fact, camped on the paper's doorstep for three days, and dispersed only when Editor Bailey, abandoning the sanctum for the rostrum, addressed the crowd to such good purpose that it peaceably dispersed. Neither Bailey nor Birney lived to see the fruition of his work. Of Birney's six sons, five served as officers in the Union Army, and four died as the result of wounds or disease contracted in service. Birney himself, a native of the South, had in 1839 freed twenty-one slaves that had been part of his father's estate. It was a day in which men had the glorious courage of their convictions.

The story which Mrs. Stowe sent to the *National Era*, in response to Dr. Bailey's request for a contribution, was called *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly*. The original intention was to conclude it in a few numbers, but so widespread was the interest it aroused, and so intense grew the conviction of the author that she had undertaken a holy mission, that it ran on until the following April. On its conclusion the *Era* declared: "Mrs. Stowe has at last brought her great work to a close. We do not recollect any production of an American writer that has excited more general and profound interest." For the serial publication she received three hundred dollars.

Among those who had been attracted to the story in the *Era* was John P. Jewett, head of the publishing house of John P. Jewett & Company of Boston, doomed to go to

the wall in the panic of 1857. Jewett—himself an ardent Abolitionist, a native of Maine and graduate of a Salem bookstore and bindery—issued a miscellaneous lot of

UNCLE TOM'S CABIN;

OR,

LIFE AMONG THE LOWLY.

BY

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:
JOHN P. JEWETT & COMPANY.
CLEVELAND, OHIO:
JEWETT, PROCTOR & WORTHINGTON.
1852.

Later printings were indicated under the volume designation

books with an accent on the "practical" type. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* looked like an attractive gamble. He would be glad to handle it on a share-and-share-alike basis, the Stowes meeting half the expenses and dividing the profits. Dr.

Stowe (who appears to have managed the whole transaction for Mrs. Stowe) protested with entire truth that the family finances were in no condition to be saddled with any such obligation. Jewett thereupon agreed to assume the entire risk on a ten percent royalty basis.

With the consent of the *Era,* Jewett published the book in two volumes on March 20, 1852—two numbers in advance of the conclusion of the serial. The first edition, according to Charles Edward Stowe, was five thousand copies. Three thousand were sold the first day. A second edition was exhausted before the end of March. By August the harassed Brunswick housewife had already received $10,000 in royalties—the income alone from that sum would maintain her hoped-for annual literary average forever. Sales reached the one hundred and twenty thousand figure during the summer "and the demand is still unabated." Before the book was a year old more than three hundred thousand copies had been sold in America alone—the equivalent, on a basis of proportionate population, of a million and a half copies today.

This unparalleled success must have proved a severe tax on the dispositions of M. D. Phillips and William Lee of the Boston publishing firm of Phillips, Sampson and Company. Harriet's older sister Catherine had mentioned the *Era* serial to Mr. Phillips, who was sufficiently impressed with the suggestion to discuss it with Mr. Lee after Catherine's departure. Mr. Lee had not been impressed. The house had a large Southern clientele; it had, moreover, a standing rule not to interfere in politics. Mr. Lee's attitude had been something cooler than lukewarm—Phillips, Sampson and Company declined the suggestion with better than the customary courtesies. Publishers have

never been able to determine in advance the attribute or the accident that makes a best seller sell.

Uncle Tom's Cabin made its bow in a black cloth binding, blind stamped, with the title-page vignette, wherein "the young folks roll on the little cabin floor" (or one of them rolls on the ground just outside it, at any rate), reproduced in gold on the front cover. Some copies were bound in lavender cloth, with four heavy gold rules enclosing not only the vignette but corner and top and bottom ornaments in gold as well. This design was duplicated, gold and all, on the back cover, and the backstrip bore four groupings of gilt floral ornaments. All the edges, too, were gilt—a veritable orgy of gold. Copies so bound, evidently for presentation by author or publisher, are much scarcer than those in black cloth and plain edges. The more elegant binding was used on other copies than those of the first edition; it is in evidence, at least, on some copies slugged "Tenth Thousand." For the Christmas trade the publishers prepared an elaborately illustrated one-volume edition. The original edition, in addition to the title-page and cover vignette, contained six illustrations, three in each volume, on plate paper, though, oddly enough, the title-page does not announce these.

In England the first year's sale certainly more than doubled the American figures. More than twenty London editions appeared during 1852, from only one of which did the author receive her due—that published by Thomas Bosworth. "The Publisher thinks it right to state," Bosworth declared in his advertisement, "that the Authoress of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' has a direct interest in the sale of this Edition; and he trusts that this fact, together with the superior typography of the volume, and

the lowness of the price, will be considered as giving it a higher claim to general patronage than is possessed by any other Edition published in this country." The book contained "A Preface by the Author, Written Expressly for this Edition," which is of interest as embodying replies to some of the criticisms which English readers especially had directed against the book:

The Author has seen in English prints some strictures respecting the parallel drawn in a part of the book between the condition of the English labouring poor and that of the slave population of the United States.

It must be borne in mind that these ideas occur in a dramatic part of the book, and are placed in the mouth of an honourable and high-minded slaveholder. It was impossible to give a dramatic representation of such a character without the introduction of this parallel. Every Southern print, every Southern politician, makes it a stereotyped apology for slavery, that the slave is better off than the labouring class of any other part of the world,—with the exception, perhaps, of the Free States of America; and statistics with regard to the condition of the English poor are more eagerly seized upon by them than those of any other nation, because England's national example of public sentiment with regard to slavery would otherwise be a weight too intolerable to be borne.

Our ideas with regard to the condition of the English poor are drawn from current English literature. Such works as Charlotte Elizabeth's little "Pin-headers," and "Lace-makers," and "Helen Fleetwood," where all the worst details are established by Parliamentary reports and other documents,—the works of Dickens, of the author of "Alton Locke" and "Yeast," have had a wide circulation in this country, and have excited a sensation with regard to the condition of the English poor little inferior to that excited in England by the details of American slavery.

So inextricably are the destinies of humanity interwoven, that every effort made in England to improve the condition of the

labouring poor tells immediately upon the interests of freedom in America; and when all the various causes now in operation, and yet to be set in operation, shall have materially and permanently bettered their condition, then the noble example of England with regard to human freedom will act with unbroken force. Daniel Webster has truly said that there is a force rising in these days superior to that of fleets and armies,—the "public sentiments of nations." That, at last, must put an end to every form of injustice and cruelty.

Another objection was met thus:

The character of Uncle Tom has been objected to as an improbability. While something might be claimed on this head for artistic license, the Author desires to quote a slaveholder's description of a favourite slave, as a parallel to her conception.

The subjoined is quoted from the published will of Judge Upshur, late Secretary of State under President Tyler:—

"I emancipate and set free my servant, David Rice, and direct my executors to give him *one hundred dollars*. I recommend him in the strongest manner to the respect, esteem, and confidence of any community in which he may happen to live. He has been my slave for twenty-four years, during all which time he has been trusted to every extent, and in every respect; my confidence in him has been unbounded; his relation to myself and family has always been such as to afford him daily opportunity to deceive and injure us, yet he has never been detected in any serious fault, nor even in an unintentional breach of the decorum of his station. His intelligence is of a high order, his integrity above all suspicion, and his sense of right and propriety correct, and even refined. I feel that he is justly entitled to carry this certificate from me in the new relations which he must now form; it is due to his long and most faithful services, and to the sincere and steady friendship which I bear to him. In the uninterrupted confidential intercourse of twenty-four years, I have never given, nor had any occasion to give him, one unpleasant word. I know no man who has fewer faults or more excellences than he."

UNCLE TOM AND LITTLE EVA À LA CRUIKSHANK

The London edition in parts illustrated by the great George is one of the scarcest forms of the story

Judge Upshur's legacy had become payable in 1845 when a new wrought-iron gun on board the United States steamer *Princeton* blew itself to pieces in the presence of a notable company of statesmen—President Tyler himself was on board, but chanced to be below decks at the instant of the tragedy. Secretary of the Navy T. W. Gilmer was killed at the same time—Judge Upshur had held the same portfolio before succeeding Daniel Webster as Secretary of State. What, one wonders, was the subsequent fate of the suddenly enriched David Rice?

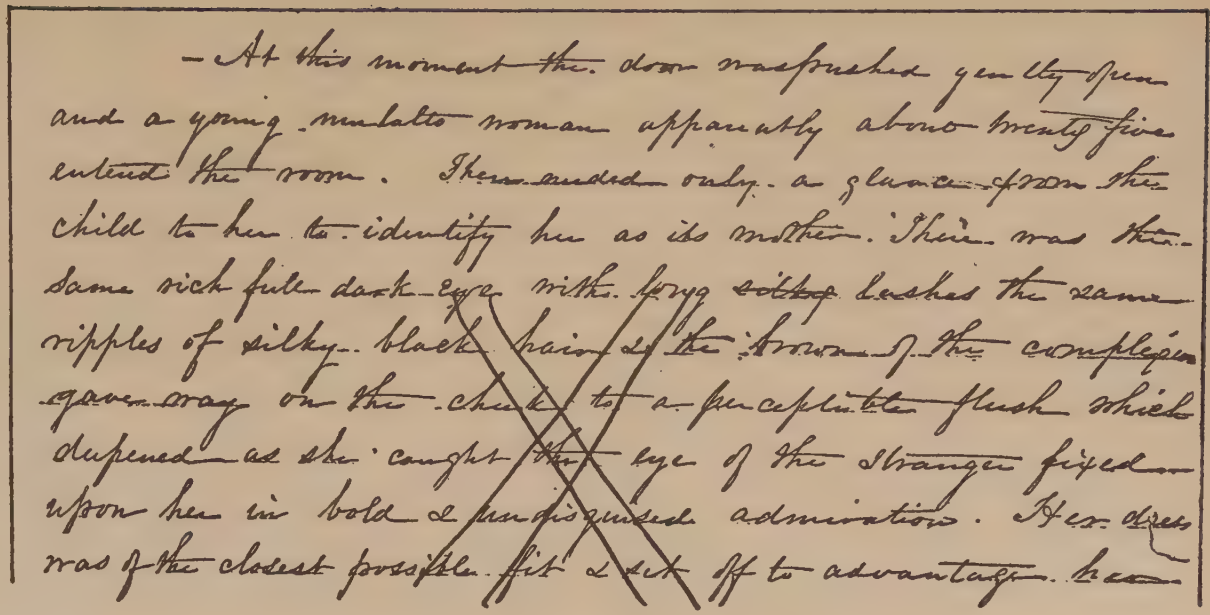
Despite "the lowness of the price" (three shillings and sixpence) it is doubtful if the Bosworth edition sold anything like as well as most of the competing London editions issued without profit to the author. It labored under the tremendous handicap of being without illustrations. The most famous of all illustrated *Uncle Toms* (it could be had for little more than half what Bosworth asked for his examplar of "superior typography") was issued in thirteen weekly numbers, each containing "Two elaborate Engravings, designed by George Cruikshank, Esq., printed separately on Plate Paper," and sold for twopence a number—two shillings twopence complete, cases for binding sixpence each. Mr. Cruikshank's name on the wrapper was printed in larger and blacker type than Mrs. Stowe's, but Mr. Cruikshank's name was customarily given such prominence—he had been making pictures before Harriet Elizabeth Beecher was born. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in this, its only issue in parts, is today excessively rare—the last auction record (1926) was $150. The one-volume edition with the Cruikshank illustrations which succeeded the issue in parts is now worth around $25. In 1853 appeared a London edition with the imposing total

of one hundred and fifty illustrations by George Thomas and T. R. Macquoid. Below the title it carried the explanation "A Tale of Slave Life in America," so that no one might be misled into thinking that Uncle Tom was a kindly old English squire and his cabin a Swiss châlet.

In the nature of the case, the first edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is scarce—books of which the original issue sells out in a week, and which sweep the country like a prairie fire, do not survive multitudinously as first editions. In the spring of 1928 an almost pristine copy brought $300 at auction in New York—just what the *Era* paid for the serial rights—more than doubling the best previous figure.

This high valuation—and the book will be worth much more as the years go by—is likely to prove an incentive to the unscrupulous to tamper with early editions of the book and convert them into apparent firsts—the thing has been done in the past, and mounting prices provide a beautiful temptation. On the title-page of each of the two volumes, between the volume designation and the imprint, the publishers inserted in subsequent issues a line specifying the total of printed copies to date. So long as the title-pages are dated 1852, it is only necessary to erase this line from each to metamorphose a copy of the one hundredth thousand into a first edition.

Happily the imposture can be readily detected. No matter how neatly an erasure is made, the paper so treated must undergo a perceptible thinning, and this thinning is immediately apparent if the sheet is held before an ordinarily strong light. No bookseller or collector should buy a copy of an ostensible first edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* without putting it to this simple test.



— At this moment the door was pushed gently open and a young mulatto woman apparently about twenty five entered the room. There needed only a glance from the child to her to identify her as its mother. There was the same rich full dark eye with long silken lashes the same ripples of silky black hair & the brown of the complexion gave way on the cheek to a perceptible flush which deepened as she caught the eye of the stranger fixed upon her in bold & undisguised admiration. Her dress was of the closest possible fit & set off to advantage her com-

FIRST APPEARANCE OF ELIZA

From a leaf of the original manuscript of a portion of Chapter II of Uncle Tom's Cabin. *The cross is probably a printer's or proofreader's check mark*

The first slug line to be inserted on the title-page appears to have been "Tenth Thousand." This opens up a fearful possibility. If, as Charles Edward Stowe says, the first printing was five thousand copies, then a second printing was made in which no statistics appeared on the title-page. If such was the case—if the first and second editions appeared without apparent mark of distinction—bibliographers have not yet reported any means of identifying one from the other. It is quite likely that no alterations were made.

No American novel has been so extensively translated as *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* In most instances the original title was simply carried over into the new medium, as in *La Case de l'Oncle Tom, La Capanna dello Zio Tommaso, La Cabaña del Tio Tomas, Chata Wuja Tomasza,* and *Khizhina dyadi Toma,* but occasionally a bit of originality was shown, nowhere more strikingly than in the Dutch version entitled *De Negerhut.*

V

Uncle Tom's Cabin drew one interesting reply in kind: *Aunt Phillis's Cabin; or, Southern Life As It Is,* by Mrs. Mary H. Eastman (Philadelphia, 1852). The book opened with a fourteen-page preface which attempted to justify slavery on Biblical grounds. Neither here nor in the two hundred and forty pages of the story proper is there any reference to Mrs. Stowe, but the sixteen pages of "Concluding Remarks" are devoted exclusively to her and to *Uncle Tom.* The arguments which Mrs. Eastman advances are characterized generally by a rather labored irony. Mrs. Eastman, on the opening page of her rebuttal,

refers to "the planter Legree, (and, with the exception of Prof. Webster, such a wretch never darkened humanity)," and returns to the cause celèbre in which Webster was the principal figure (next to his victim) toward the close of her presentation: "Can we judge of society by a few isolated instances? If so, the learned professors of New England borrow money, and when they do not choose to pay, they murder their creditors, and cut them in pieces!"

Here Mrs. Eastman was guilty of the identical faulty logic which she deprecated. It was grossly unfair to pluralize the word professor on the strength of the egregious misconduct of John W. Webster. It is true that on November 23, 1849, Professor Webster, then occupying the chair of chemistry and mineralogy at Harvard University, murdered Dr. George Parkman on account of the latter's insistent demands for the repayment of a loan, and then attempted to dispose of the body by burning it in a laboratory furnace in the building of the Medical College where the crime occurred. Unfortunately for Professor Webster no less than for Dr. Parkman, the latter three years earlier had been equipped with a set of false teeth, and the discovery of these unconsumed, and their identification by the dentist who had made them, sent Professor Webster to the gallows in the summer of 1850. The incident was still fresh in the public mind, and Mrs. Eastman could be assured that her thrust would be recognizable if not telling.

On the character of Uncle Tom Mrs. Eastman had this comment:

> And such a saint as Uncle Tom was, too! One would have thought his master, with the opinion he had of his religious qualifications, would have kept him until he died, and then have sold

him bone after bone to the Roman Catholics. Why, every tooth in his head would have brought its price. St. Paul was nothing

AUNT PHILLIS'S CABIN;

OR,

SOUTHERN LIFE AS IT IS.

BY MRS MARY H. EASTMAN.

Philadelphia:
Lippincott, Grambo & Co.
1852.

A SOUTHERN REPLY

But Mrs. Eastman's son served in the Union forces and died as a result of war injuries

but a common man compared with him, for St. Paul had been wicked once; and even after his miraculous conversion, he felt that sin was still impelling him to do what he would not. But not so with Uncle Tom! He was the very perfection of a saint.

Well might St. Clare have proposed using him for a family chaplain, or suggested to himself the idea of ascending to heaven by Tom's skirts. Mrs. Stowe should have carried out one of her ideas in his history, and have made him Bishop of Carthage. I have never heard or read of so perfect a character. All the saints and martyrs that ever came to unnatural deaths, could not show such an amount of excellence. I only wonder he managed to stay so long in this world of sin.

Mrs. Eastman was a Virginian, seven years Mrs. Stowe's junior, who, at the age of seventeen, as Mary Henderson, had married Captain Seth Eastman, U. S. A., whose lot was cast for several years in such remote regions as Fort Snelling, Minnesota, and other frontier posts. This experience enabled his wife to write several valuable accounts of Indian life and legend—she was more convincing in her portrayal of the red man than of the black. Fate handled her with a degree of irony no less ponderous than that which characterized the "Concluding Remarks" of *Aunt Phillis's Cabin*. Her son, Robert Langdon Eastman, who was graduated from West Point just in time to participate as a Union officer in the débâcle of Bull Run, was later invalided back to West Point as assistant professor of drawing, and died seven months after Appomattox, aged twenty-five, as a result of disabilities incurred in the field, his life a sacrifice in opposition to the cause which his mother's pen had so devotedly championed.

Mrs. Stowe herself did not come unscathed through the ordeal by fire which her efforts had helped to precipitate. Her son Frederick William enlisted in the First Massachusetts Volunteers at the outbreak of the war, when twenty-two years old, and by the summer of 1863 had won his captaincy. He was severely wounded in the head at Gettysburg by a shell fragment, and never recovered

from the effects. After the war Mrs. Stowe bought him a plantation in Florida, but the change of scene and climate brought little relief. In 1872, believing that the sea voyage would benefit him, he sailed to San Francisco around Cape Horn. It is known that he reached San Francisco in safety—and nothing more has ever been known.

Mrs. Stowe and Mrs. Eastman seem never to have met; had they done so, all differences would assuredly have been forgotten in the bond of bereavement. But they had more than that in common. Each had the same nebulous solution for the color problem. Thus Mrs. Stowe in her preface: "When an enlightened and Christianized community shall have, on the shores of Africa, laws, language, and literature, drawn from among us, may then the scenes of the house of bondage be to them like the remembrance of Egypt to the Israelite,—a motive of thankfulness to Him who hath redeemed them!" And thus Mrs. Eastman in her "Concluding Remarks": "The Jews ever turn their eyes and affections towards Jerusalem, as their home; so should the free colored people in America regard Liberia. Africa, once their mother country, should, in its turn, be the country of their adoption."

Uncle Tom's Cabin was speedily seized upon and converted into a play in a score of different versions. In 1855 Mrs. Stowe herself contributed a dramatic rendition called *The Christian Slave,* but it was by then far too late in the day to catch up with the host of unauthorized playwrights who were riding to commercial success, if not to eternal fame, on the strength of their borrowings. The stagecraft of an earlier day (no less than the audiences) gloried in the scenic possibilities offered in the flight of Eliza and the ascension of little Eva. The bloodhound, gentlest

member of his genus, but endowed with a supercanine sense of smell, came all unjustly to be linked with the werewolf and the blood-sweating behemoth and other sublimities of animal horror. The world shuddered and wept and had the time of its life, and has gone on doing it for nearly eighty years, thrilled to the heart by the portrayal of the ante-bellum woes of "a race hitherto ignored by the associations of polite and refined society."

GEORGE DU MAURIER AND *TRILBY*

I

ONE evening when the nineteenth century was hovering on the rim of the Beardsley period two middle-aged men were strolling along Bayswater High Street, London. One of them, midway between fifty and sixty, was called George Louis Palmella Busson du Maurier. The other, nine years younger than his companion, proved the law of averages in so far as it relates to nomenclature by inscribing himself simply Henry James.

Du Maurier's paternal grandfather had fled France when the Revolution broke out, and his son, George's father, was English born. George himself had been born in Paris, and had lived as a child in Belgium, France, and England. Henry James was a native of New York City, but for nearly a generation had been on much better cultural terms with England, France, Switzerland and Italy. Of all the men and women who walked along Bayswater High Street that evening, certainly no two, or no two hundred, could hope to match the intensive cosmopolitanism personified by the middle-aged strollers.

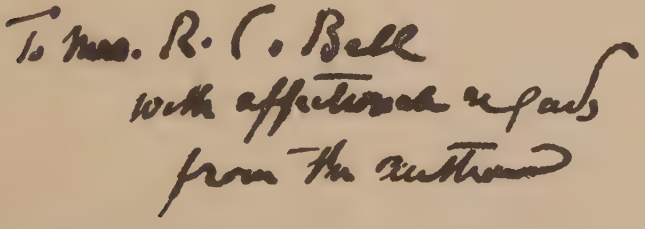
Du Maurier was an artist on the staff of *Punch*. James was a novelist. Plots, he had just told his companion, were hard to find.

"Plots!" jested the *Punch* artist. "I am full of plots!"

Thereupon he told his friend the story of a Scotch-Irish model of the Quartier Latin who had lovely feet but was utterly tone-deaf, and who was converted into a magnificent prima donna by a sinister but capable Oriental mesmerist. Some attractive Britons—art students—entered into the picture, and there were large ingredients of love interest, studio life, psychoanalysis ahead of time, and enough other related complications to delight any seeker after plots.

"But *you* ought to write that story," declared James at the conclusion of the scenario.

"I can't write," replied Du Maurier. "I have never written. If you like the plot so much you may take it."



Inscription by Du Maurier in a copy of the first edition of Peter Ibbetson

The gift was too valuable to accept, James demurred. The sincerity of his approval, however, seemed to be unquestionable. His enthusiasm kindled such an instant fire in Du Maurier that the latter, on reaching home, sat down and wrote until far into the morning. When he rested he had completed two instalments of his first novel. And that novel, oddly enough, had nothing to do with Scotch-Irish models with lovely feet or with sinister Oriental mesmerists. The story was called *Peter Ibbetson,* and on its com-

pletion—he wrote it in English, translated it into French, and then brought it back into English—Du Maurier planned to show it to James R. Osgood of the house of Harper in New York, who had been enthusiastic about the idea. Osgood happened to be in America, so Du Maurier sent the manuscript after him. It was accepted for serialization in *Harper's Magazine* and later issued as a book, enjoying a modest success in both forms in the early months of its career.

A few months later Du Maurier had finished a new story founded on the plot which he had offered to Henry James. It was called *Trilby*. It, too, appeared serially in *Harper's*, beginning with the January, 1894, number. Barely was the snow off the ground that winter when *Harper's* was visited with that agreeable phenomenon, an increase in circulation. *Trilby* was catching on. It appeared as a book in the late summer. By the end of 1894 it had sold more than a hundred thousand copies, and it entered the new year—the year that was to see the publication of *Almayer's Folly* and *The Red Badge of Courage*—with its momentum unabated. What with its abundance of illustrations—one hundred and twenty drawings, all "by the author"—it was an expensive book to produce, and sold for $1.75 in a $1.50 day. But the book-buying public was not to be deterred by that extra quarter. Small booksellers who customarily took one, or, in moments of enthusiasm, two copies of a new book bought *Trilby* twenty-five, fifty, one hundred copies at a time. Libraries reported a demand unmatched in their history; in Boston seventy-two requests were received by branch libraries in one day; Chicago (not a Chicago of three million souls, but of

something more than one million, not including stranded visitors to the World's Columbian Exposition), had twenty-six copies available to the public, but "we could use two hundred and sixty and never find a copy on the shelves." Many years later a housecleaning in the St. Louis Public Library brought to light no fewer than four hundred battered *Trilbys*. Philadelphia produced a Trilby sausage, New York a Trilby ham and a Trilby Coterie and Chowder Club. An enterprising caterer sold ice cream molded to the shape (and possibly to the size—it was a generous day) of La Svengali's foot. There were Trilby entertainments from one end of the country to the other; *Au Clair de la Lune* and *Malbrouck S'en Va-t-en Guerre* were sung everywhere in unrecognizable patois but with wholly recognizable heartiness. A young Brooklyn matron debated Trilby's morals with her spouse and won the argument by breaking an earthenware crock over his head.

And there was a play. It was produced on March 4, 1895, at the Boston Museum, the handiwork of Paul M. Potter, who forthwith emerged from the hack dramatist class and rose to heights of affluence. The New York premier fell on April 15th, and if the Yankee Stadium had been available it could probably have been filled for the occasion. Virginia Harned was Trilby and Wilton Lackaye Svengali. A burlesque called *Thrilby*, with Fay Templeton in the title-rôle, was far more meritorious and popular than two clumsy parodies of the book, *Biltry* and *Drilby*. And how, one wonders, did all this éclat and fanfare and hullabaloo react on a human sensitive plant called James Abbott McNeill Whistler?

In the same year in which Du Maurier had first seen the light in the City of Light itself, Whistler had been born in Lowell, Massachusetts. He would doubtless have

TRILBY

A Novel

BY

GEORGE DU MAURIER

AUTHOR OF "PETER IBBETSON"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

"*Aux nouvelles que Peppete*
Va bientôt vous vous pleurer"

NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
1894

Title page of the first American and first illustrated edition of Trilby

II

much preferred Paris as a birthplace; at least he was never a great booster for Lowell, and Lowell is to this day, and reasonably, a little indignant about it. In 1851, at the age of seventeen, he had entered West Point, where his record provided something of a parallel to that estab-

lished twenty years earlier by Cadet Edgar Allan Poe. Young Whistler slid rapidly down the academic stairs and touched ground one day in the chemistry class. "What is silicon?" he was asked. "Silicon," he replied, "is a gas." His military career terminated as soon thereafter as the necessary orders could be dispatched through channels. "If silicon had been a gas," he remarked in later years, "I might have been a general in the United States Army," and the Civil War would have been an even more hazardous and interesting enterprise than it actually was.

In 1856 the orbits of Whistler and Du Maurier crossed in Gleyre's studio in Paris—the Carrel's of *Trilby*. Four years later Du Maurier went to London to seek his fortune and for a few months shared lodgings with his old studio mate. Four years later Du Maurier sold his first *Punch* drawing. It depicted himself and Whistler, the former with lighted cigar in hand, entering a photographer's; the photographer protests, remarking: "Please to remember, gentlemen, that this is not a common hartist's studio." The likeness of Mr. Whistler is hardly flattering, but this is the fault of execution rather than of intent. Anyway there is no record of Whistler's having entered a remonstrance.

At the time the cartoon was published Whistler certainly had not yet won a complete mastery of the none too gentle art of making enemies. Twenty years later he achieved at one stroke the full degree of perfection. John Ruskin, the Great Cham of Victorian art, struck viciously at a group of Whistler's nocturnes in the Grosvenor Gallery. This was supposed to finish Whistler, but it did not. Whistler had the law on Ruskin. He sued him for a thousand pounds and was awarded a farthing, but

DU MAURIER'S FIRST PUNCH DRAWING

From the issue for October 6, 1860. Whistler is the central figure of the trio at the left

Whistler's reputation for blasting and blistering causticity was made.

Trilby as a *Harper's* serial was not many months old when the mail brought this most remarkable "letter to the editor":

Sir: It would seem, notwithstanding my boastful declaration, that, after all, I have not, before leaving England, completely rid myself of the abomination—the "friend!" One solitary, un-

heeded one—Mr. George du Maurier—still remained, hidden in Hampstead. On that healthy heath he has been harboring, for nearly half a life, every villainy of good fellowship that could be perfected by the careless frequentation of our early intimacy and my unsuspecting *camaraderie*. Of this pent-up envy, malice and furtive intent he never at any moment during all that time allowed me, while affectionately grasping his honest Anglo-French fist, to detect the faintest indication. Now that my back is turned, the old *marmite* of our *pot-au-feu* he fills with the picric acid of thirty years' spite, and, in an American magazine, fires off his bomb of mendacious recollection and poisoned rancour. The lie with which it is loaded *à mon intention* he proposes for my possible "future biographer"—but I fancy it explodes, as is usual, in his own waistcoat, and he furnishes, in his present unseemly state, an excellent example of all those others who, like himself, have thought a foul friend a finer fellow than an open enemy.

J. M'NEILL WHISTLER.

Paris.

Reflection: The *compagnon* of the *pétard* we guillotine. Guineas are given to the popular companion who prepares his infernal machine for the distinguished associates in whose friendship he has successfully speculated.

The casus belli behind this declaration was the following passage in the March instalment of *Trilby:*

Then there was Joe Sibley, an idle apprentice, the king of bohemia, *le roi des truands*, to whom everything was forgiven, as to François Villon, "à cause de ses gentillesses."

Always in debt, like Svengali; like Svengali, vain, witty, and a most exquisite and original artist; and also eccentric in his attire (though clean), so that people would stare at him as he walked along—which he adored! But (unlike Svengali) he was genial, caressing, sympathetic, charming; the most irresistible friend in the world as long as his friendship lasted—but that was not forever!

The moment his friendship left off, his enmity began at once. Sometimes this enmity would take the simple and straightforward form of trying to punch his ex-friend's head; and when the ex-friend was too big, he would get some new friend to help him. And much bad blood would be caused in this way—though very little was spilled. And all this bad blood was not made better by the funny things he went on saying through life about the unlucky one who had managed to offend him—things that stuck forever! His bark was worse than his bite—he was better with his tongue than with his fists—a dangerous joker! But when he met another joker face to face, even an inferior joker—with a rougher wit, a coarser thrust, a louder laugh, a tougher hide—he would just collapse, like a pricked bladder!

He is now perched on such a topping pinnacle (of fame and notoriety combined) that people can stare at him from two hemispheres at once; and so famous as a wit that when he jokes (and he is always joking) people laugh first, and then ask what it was he was joking about. And you can even make your own mild funniments raise a roar by merely prefacing them, "As Joe Sibley once said."

Then follows an account of "Lorrimer, the industrious apprentice," who "could only worship one god at a time. It was either Michael Angelo, Phidias, Paul Veronese, Tintoret, Raphael, or Titian—never a modern—moderns didn't exist! . . . Each of them would last him a couple of months or so; then he would give us a month's holiday, and take up another." And so back to Joe Sibley:

Joe Sibley, equally enthusiastic, was more faithful. He was a monotheist, and had but one god, and was less tiresome in the expression of his worship. He is so still—and his god is still the same—no stodgy old master this divinity, but a modern of the moderns! For forty years this cosmopolite Joe has been singing his one god's praise in every tongue he knows and every country—and also his contempt for all rivals to this godhead—whether

quite sincerely or not, who can say? Men's motives are so mixed! But so eloquently, so wittily, so prettily, that he almost persuades you to be a fellow-worshipper—*almost*, only!—for if he did *quite*, you (being a capitalist) would buy nothing but "Sibleys" (which you don't). For Sibley was the god of Joe's worship, and none other! And he would hear of no other genius in the world!

Let us hope that he sometimes laughed at himself in his sleeve —or winked at himself in his looking-glass, with his tongue in his cheek!

And here, lest there should be any doubt as to his identity, let me add that although quite young he had beautiful white hair like an Albino's, as soft and bright as floss silk—and also that he was tall and slim and graceful; and, like most of the other personages concerned in this light story, very nice to look at—with pretty manners (and an unimpeachable moral tone).

The identity of Joe Sibley may not have been transparent to one in ten thousand *Trilby* readers, but it was transparent to J. McNeill Whistler, and that was enough. Even the name was palpable. *Whistler* would Gallicize as *siffleur*, and from *siffleur* to *Sibley* was no violent phonological metamorphosis.

In addition to the Sibley paragraphs there were two offending drawings. The Sibley passage did not appear in the book, nor did one of the erring pictures. The apparition of Whistler in the second drawing was altered to suit in the American edition; somehow, doubtless by oversight, it appeared unaltered in the English illustrated edition, and none of the principals to the argument appears to have noticed the fact. This picture portrays a party at Carrel's with Joe Sibley as one of the least conspicuous in more than a score of orderly celebrants. In the magazine Sibley's face is adorned only with a thin thread of moustache; in the New York edition of the book a Van Dyke beard has

JOE SIBLEY (LEFT), ALIAS JIM WHISTLER

This drawing appeared in the Harper's Magazine *serialization of* Trilby *but was omitted from the book*

been scratched hastily down his chin, certainly not by Du Maurier; the same unknown hand has removed a monocle and substituted, quite unintentionally a remarkable rendering of a black eye.

And in the text, Joe Sibley is converted into "yellow-haired Antony, a Swiss," who was "always in debt, like

Svengali" and "somewhat eccentric in his attire . . . so that people would stare at him as he walked along—a thing that always gave him dire offense!" Antony, it seems, was "void of any self-conceit." He was a great joker, but his jokes "are so good-natured that you almost resent their being made at anybody's expense but your own. . . . Indeed, in spite of his success, I don't suppose he ever made an enemy in his life."

The disguise was complete.

The renovated passage was shown to Whistler and received his imprimatur, a fact of which he made much. It is incredible (or would be incredible were it not for the fact that there are vast blind spots in everyone's sense of humor) that he failed completely to see the irony of it.

Who came off best in this verbal exchange of punts? The evidence has been given; the reader may himself serve as juror. If, for the sake of argument, Du Maurier's culpability be assessed at three-fifths, then Whistler's ought not to be computed at less than three-quarters.

III

The suppression of the Sibley material in *Harper's* has made the serial publication of the story the most valuable form from the collector's point of view. Many readers extracted the serial instalments and had them bound separately, and in this form *Trilby* is a rather frequent auction visitor, bringing around fifteen dollars. It is much more desirable, of course, in the original parts unextracted and unbound—in the January-August, 1894, numbers, that is, of *Harper's Magazine*. The parts in their original

state have sold for as high as seventy dollars (at the William Harris Arnold sale in 1924, the item including two copies of the March number with the Sibley matter).

The three-volume English edition of 1894 commands an impressive premium over the original American book edition of the same year, selling for around one hundred dollars—the Kern copy topped all records in 1929 by

Enlarged detail from the drawing of the party in Carrel's studio showing Whistler's likeness as it appeared in the magazine publication of Trilby *and the disguised presentment as prepared for the book*

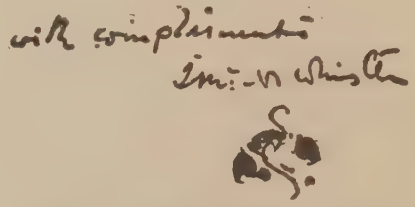
selling for one hundred and seventy dollars. Yet if one can own only a single copy of *Trilby*, this form, financial considerations aside, is certainly the least desirable. It has no pictures. *Trilby* without the Du Maurier drawings must always be of rather less sentimental interest than *Hamlet* without the Prince. The original drawings, incidentally, are now in the Morgan Library in New York.

The original New York edition—the first illustrated edition—is a common book. Its collection value is comparatively negligible—a fine copy, with the easily-soiled

THE PARTY AT CARREL'S

Du Maurier's drawing as it appeared in Harper's Magazine, *showing Whistler (right background, head almost touching the fencer's left elbow) with monocle and without beard. The representation was altered for book publication as shown in the enlargements on the opposite page*

café-au-lait covers in spotless condition, should be worth ten or fifteen dollars of any collector's money. *Trilby*, in fact, in its 1894 and 1895 editions, is easily the most frequently met with book on the secondhand bookseller's shelves, which is ample proof of the tremendous vogue it enjoyed. For when a book is as omnipresent as this, it means that it was a signal success or a signal failure—and *Trilby* is still selling.

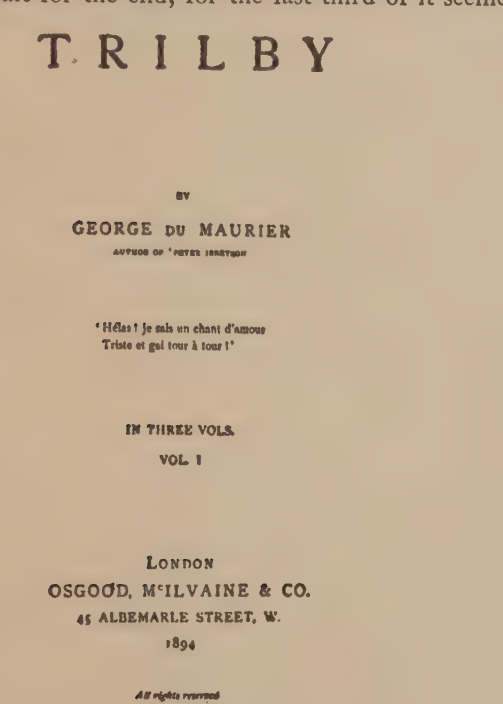


Whistler's signature, with the famous butterfly

IV

When the reasons for the unprecedented success of *Trilby* have been tabulated and analyzed, then publishing will become an exact science and provide an assured road to wealth. The way of a best seller has never been determined, and it is well that it never has been and never will be. No one was more confounded by the phenomenon of *Trilby* than Du Maurier himself. William Dean Howells, who had few peers for book wisdom in his day, found himself equally unable to account for *Trilby's* "obstreperous triumph." His comments, as embodied in his foreword to *English Society* (New York, 1897), a collection of sketches by Du Maurier, are significant and illuminating:

It was my good fortune to have the courage to write to Du Maurier when *Trilby* was only half printed, and to tell him how much I liked the gay, sad story. In every way it was well that I did not wait for the end, for the last third of it seemed to



TRILBY

BY

GEORGE DU MAURIER

AUTHOR OF 'PETER IBBETSON'

'Hélas! Je sais un chant d'amour
Triste et gai tour à tour!'

IN THREE VOLS.

VOL. I

LONDON
OSGOOD, McILVAINE & CO.
45 ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1894

All rights reserved

The first English edition of
Trilby *was one of the last of*
the three-deckers

me so altogether forced in its conclusions that I could not have offered my praises with a whole heart, nor he accepted them with any, if the disgust with its preposterous popularity, which he so frankly, so humorously expressed, had then begun in him. But the liking which its readers felt had not yet become loathsome to the author, and he wrote me back a charming note, promising me the mystery, and enough of it, which I had hoped for, because of my pleasure in the true-dreaming in *Peter Ibbetson;* and

speaking briefly, most modestly and fitly, of his commencing novelist at sixty, and his relative misgivings and surprises.

It was indeed one of the most extraordinary things in the history of literature, and without a parallel, at least to my ignorance. He might have commenced and failed; that would have been indefinitely less amazing than his most amazing success; but it was very amazing that he should have commenced at all. It is useless to say that he had commenced long before, and in the literary property of his work he had always been an author. This theory will not justify itself to any critical judgment; one might as well say, if some great novelist distinguished for his sense of color took to painting, that he had always been an artist. The wonder of Du Maurier's essay, the astounding spectacle of his success, cannot be diminished by any such explanation of it. He commenced novelist in *Peter Ibbetson*, and so far as literature was concerned he succeeded in even greater fulness than he has succeeded since.

This opinion, delivered within three years of the appearance of *Trilby*, in all likelihood anticipates the verdict of posterity—of the majority of that segment of posterity, certainly, which has come to be since *Trilby* first won the world more than a generation ago. Whether *Trilby* or *Peter Ibbetson* be the greater novel, however, is, in the sense of popular acceptance, an idle question. Du Maurier may be said to have been fortunate in writing only three novels (of *The Martian* it is enough to say that in most respects it is the poorest of the three, and in at least one the best), for his complete works are so circumscribed in bulk that a new admirer of one of the trio is almost certain to read the rest. Neither Thackeray nor Meredith nor Hardy nor Trollope will ever attain to such an approximation to complete readability. And that high proportion of Du Maurier's readability was achieved and has been held by *Trilby*.

Never in English or any other literature has there been exhibited such a happy marriage of talents as Du Maurier's. Author-illustrators and illustrator-authors were no fresh phenomenon before Du Maurier's day (the name of Thackeray occurs instantly and inevitably), but never before or since has there lived a novelist who could delineate his characters so exactly as he wished them to appear to himself and to his readers. There are illustrators who are never quite able to understand what the author's creations are meant to look like (which may be the author's own fault), and there are illustrators who simply take charge of an author and make his characters so completely their own that the characters are thereafter utterly divorced in the reader's mind from the author's conception of them. There are illustrators who perform their tasks with competence and sympathy and yet contrive (quite pardonably) to present *their* conception of a character, which conception may be utterly at variance with that already limned in the mind's eye of the reader. And there are still other illustrators who, compelled to adhere to an author's specifications, are by that very adherence led to depict a character far otherwise than the reader himself would picture him. For example, the reader, on first acquaintance with a specified character in a specified novel, may immediately figure that character in his imagination as smooth-shaven. On page 101 the author casually mentions a moustache. The moustache has never been absent from the character's face as visioned by the author. Reader and author are equally helpless. The former continues to see the character as smooth-shaven; the author on page 243 again casually alludes to the moustache, and presto, the reader must equip the character with instantaneous

false whiskers and snatch them off again as soon as the jarring allusion is passed. One is never in such doubt about Taffy, Little Billee or the Laird. One is never in such doubt about Svengali. And Trilby's stately height and tread and figure would be recognizable today if she stepped onto the concert platform with the tearful tidings of Malbrouck gone to the wars.

Du Maurier the artist, indeed, was much more than an unknown quantity when the draughtsman turned his hand to the construction of plots. He had for years been enjoying a vogue as a master exponent of "the craft of portraying, by means of little pen-and-ink strokes, lines and scratches, a small portion of the world in which we live; such social and domestic incidents as lend themselves to humorous or satirical treatment; the illustrated criticism of life, of the life of our time and country, in its lighter aspects." Thus Du Maurier himself defined his art in *Social Pictorial Satire*, a warmly sympathetic study of the great *Punch* illustrators who had been his immediate forerunners and were for a time his co-workers—John Leech and Charles Keene.

Not the least interesting evidence of Du Maurier's popularity as a pictorial satirist was his influence on the humorous American university art of his day. Undergraduate draughtsmanship is usually characterized by an awkwardness that is partially compensated for by the sophistication shown in the handling of the situation which the drawing seeks to portray. Undergraduate artists, moreover, like undergraduate poets, are notorious copy-cats, but no imitation exhibits a more sincere or rapt flattery, or involves less compromise of artistic or moral integrity. *College Cuts*, for instance, consisting of selections from

the *Columbia Spectator* for 1880, 1881 and 1882, and published at New York in 1882, was frankly dedicated "to George du Maurier (if he will accept)," and hardly one of the seventy drawings or the seventy accompanying captions but is thoroughly in the Du Maurier vein.

V

The 1894 New York edition of *Trilby* is divisible into two issues, and the point that distinguishes the earlier from the later is one of the most curious in the realm of bibliography. On page 145, beginning with the sixth line, the text in the first issue reads as follows:

> And these jokes are so good-natured that you almost resent their being made at anybody's expense but your own—never from Antony.
>
> "The aimless jest that striking has caused pain,
> The idle word that he'd wish back again!"
>
> Indeed, in spite of his success, I don't suppose he ever made an enemy in his life.

It doesn't make sense. Cut out the period after "Antony" and all is well. In later issues of the 1894 edition the period *was* cut out—an elementary bit of surgery even if performed on the plate with the dullest penknife. The distinction is physically trivial, but grammatically and bibliographically of considerable importance. It is not an affair of a casual mashed letter, but a correction consciously made to remedy a defect unconsciously made. Or subconsciously made—the printer may have assumed that the end of a paragraph called for a period at the very least, and the proofreader seems to have agreed with him. Anyway, the period was there.

The point is of particular sentimental interest for the reason that it occurs in the description of "yellow-haired Antony, a Swiss," which was substituted for the account of Joe Sibley in the serial publication to which Whistler made such biting objection. The irony in the account of Antony is strong throughout, but nowhere stronger than in the passage just quoted which enshrines the point.

The first American edition has two leaves of advertisements at the end, one devoted to press opinions of *Peter Ibbetson* (which forthwith began to boom as a consequence of the reputation which *Trilby* made for its author) and the other to similar comment on "Thomas Hardy's Masterpiece: Tess of the D'Urbervilles," which had led the Cincinnati *Commercial-Gazette* to conclude that "it is not an extravagant estimate to place Thomas Hardy at the head of living writers of English fiction."

Tess and Trilby. When shall the world look upon their end-of-the-century like again?

JOHN BUNYAN AND *THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*

I

NO one in all Elstow, perhaps, could swear quite so proficiently as Tinker Bunyan's son John. Elstow was, of course, a tiny village, but the population of the shire town of Bedford, a mile or so away, might conceivably have been included to make the record more impressive. There were plenty of ways to account for it. Tinker Tom himself was a rather slovenly parent, and poor into the bargain, though he and his wife Margaret had something to do with urging the slender schooling that was John's equipment for the world. The school itself could not have been a vast influence for good, if, as is possible but not provable, it was that presided over by William Varney. At about the time John was attending Master Varney's establishment, if he attended it at all, a petition was being circulated in Bedford charging that Varney "has grossly neglected the school by frequent absence from it, by night-walking and mis-spending his time, in taverns and ale-houses." As he was "also very cruel when present to the boys," the pupils must have rejoiced doubly whenever the rowdy pedagogue failed to make an appearance.

John had certainly been sometime out of school, Master

Varney's or another's, when, in 1644, when John was fifteen, his mother died. Within a month his sister Margaret followed her. Before another month had passed Tinker Bunyan had taken another wife. John Bunyan's grief could hardly have been mitigated by this piece of callousness. It must have been a relief, a few months later, to get into the army.

Unfortunately, research has not been able to determine which army it was. The first civil war was in full career. A few months later—in June, 1645—Cromwell delivered the stinging blow at Naseby that virtually ended it. Bunyan probably did not have an opportunity to take a very active part, whether he was on the side of King or Parliament. At all events, in 1646 he was back in Elstow plying the family trade of tinker. At nineteen or twenty he married.

Of Bunyan's early prowess in swearing there is his own statement as witness. "Even as a child," he recorded, "I had few equals in cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming the holy name of God." Assuredly one is taking no liberties with history when, in accepting these words at their face value, and combining with them the vigorous fancy that must have found some external manifestations in childhood and youth, one reaches the conclusion that John Bunyan's capacities in this detail were distinguished. Swearing, despite a rather general supposition to the contrary, is rarely colorful or picturesque, for the very reason that those who rely on the more powerful expletives to accent an emotion, or no emotion at all, are rarely endowed with sufficient imagination or vocabulary to impart any degree of variety to the sturdier elements in their speech.

History, like the parish register at Elstow, does not record the name of Bunyan's wife—it is possible they were married elsewhere. But she was certainly the godly daughter of a godly father, transcending in her pedigree coronets and Norman blood. "This woman and I," said Bunyan, "came together as poor as poor might be, not having so much household stuff as a dish or spoon betwixt us both." Mrs. Bunyan, did, however, contribute two books to the new establishment, *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and *The Practise of Piety*. These priceless association copies appear to have vanished from the face of the earth. Another that is equally priceless fortunately survives—Bunyan's copy of the three-volume 1641 edition of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* with his signature at the foot of each title-page and, in volume three, the date 1662 added. The volumes, formerly preserved in the Literary and Scientific Institute at Bedford, were acquired by J. Pierpont Morgan the elder in 1911.

Outwardly the four years following Bunyan's marriage differed little from those of the average new husband of his time—the difference, if any, was all on the side of piety and respectability. His chief shortcoming appears to have been his pretty regular attendance at the village hockey green on Sunday—but he went to service first, and went again in the evening, "very devoutly to say and sing as the others did." Inwardly, however, it was a period of such critical storm and stress as few men before or since have endured. The story of this tense spiritual drama is unfolded in all the passion of sincerity in *Grace Abounding for the Chief of Sinners*, one of the world's remarkable autobiographies. Picture the torments of a mind that could reason in this fashion:

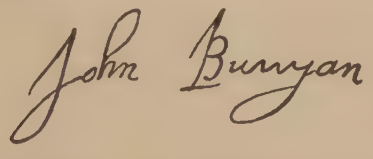
Now you must know, that before this I had taken much delight in ringing, but my conscience beginning to be tender, I thought such practice was but vain, and therefore forced myself to leave it; yet my mind hankered; wherefore I would go to the steeple-house and look on, though I durst not ring; but I thought this did not become religion neither; yet I forced myself, and would look on still. But quickly after, I began to think, "How, if one of the bells should fall?" Then I chose to stand under a main beam that lay overthwart the steeple, from side to side, thinking here I might stand sure; but then I thought again, should the bell fall with a swing, it might first hit the wall, and then rebounding upon me, might kill me for all this beam. This made me stand in the steeple-door; and now, thought I, I am safe enough; for if the bell should then fall, I can slip out behind these thick walls, and so be preserved notwithstanding. So after this I would yet go to see them ring, but would not go any further than the steeple-door; but then it came into my head, "How, if the steeple itself should fall?" And this thought—it may, for aught I know, when I stood and looked on—did continually so shake my mind, that I durst not stand at the steeple-door any longer, but was forced to flee, for fear the steeple should fall upon my head.

One notes curiously that the culminating temptation of this soul-tortured epoch was "to sell and part with the blessed Christ, to exchange him for the things of this life, for anything." In the up-to-date significance of the term, probably no man since St. Paul has wielded more influence to "sell Christ" than John Bunyan.

In 1655, at the age of twenty-six, Bunyan became a minister of God's word. He preached anywhere, indoors or out, but "I preached what I felt." His was no meagre endowment of oratory, but before the gift of tongues was the conviction with which he spoke, the dignity and purity of his utterance, compact with truths applicable to sound

conduct in this world as a preparation for a world to come.

His theology, like the man himself, was utterly without subtleties and complexities. "He knew nothing of philosophy, nothing of history, nothing of literature," James Anthony Froude declares in his study of Bunyan. "The doubts to which he acknowledged being without their natural food, had never presented themselves in a form which would have compelled him to submit to remain uncertain. Doubt, as he had felt it, was a direct enemy of morality and purity, and as such he had fought



with it and conquered it. Protestant Christianity was true. All mankind were perishing unless they saw it to be true. This was his message; a message—supposing him to have been right—of an importance so immeasurable that all else was nothing. . . . His doctrine was the doctrine of the best and strongest minds in Europe. It had been believed by Luther, it had been believed by Knox. It was believed at that moment by Oliver Cromwell as completely as by Bunyan himself. It was believed, so far as such a person could be said to believe anything, by the all-accomplished Leibnetz himself. Few educated people use the language of it now. In them it was a fire from heaven shining like a sun in a dark world."

Four years passed, and with their passage the fame of Bunyan the preacher grew. In 1659 Cromwell died; the following year Charles II landed at Dover, the first suc-

cessful invader since the Conqueror, "and in an instant," says John Richard Green, "the whole face of England was changed. All that was noblest and best in Puritanism was whirled away with its pettiness and its tyranny in the current of the nation's hate."

The most telling direct thrust was the adoption of an act of uniformity which compelled the use of the Prayer Book in public worship and demanded the assent of every minister to everything in it. A time of grace was allowed wherein this state of unanimity might be consummated; on its expiration some two thousand churchmen were ousted for nonconformity.

Bunyan had no church to be ousted from. This technicality, however, did not stand in the way of his arrest. The Restoration had been an accomplished fact for only six months when he was thrown into Bedford jail for preaching in unlicensed conventicles. "His refusal to abstain from preaching kept him there twelve years," Green records. This bald statement is likely to conjure up a slightly inaccurate picture. It is certain that the local authorities tried their hardest to keep him out, but Bunyan was not the man to fall in with any such well-intentioned endeavors. The law was the law, and to jail he went.

During the early years of his ministry Bunyan's wife had died, leaving him two small daughters, one of whom, little blind Mary, died while he was in prison. In 1659 he had married again; his wife's name was Elizabeth. She had borne him two children before his arrest; a third was soon due; the strain of the arrest produced a premature delivery, and the child died.

The picture is pitiful—the man of stalwart courage and no less stalwart convictions going out to what ultimate

doom he knew not (the gallows at the end, he half believed, if he persisted in his defiance, and persist he would). The details of that parting cannot be overdrawn. But the details of the years that followed have repeatedly been grossly overdrawn. One must not picture Bunyan as passing the long interval in squalid and unrelieved confinement. His lot would have been far worse, perhaps, had this New Englander who never left Old England lived in Massachusetts at the same time. Friends were allowed to visit him as well as his family. He even preached to them; more than that, he was at least occasionally permitted to leave his quarters and spend the night at home. He preached in the woods as of old—and his martyrdom naturally did nothing to depress his fame. For all that, the days dragged slowly. He made tags for bootlaces, and he read. And as a further means of passing the time, and largely for his own entertainment, he wrote part of a book.

In the spring of 1672 the order for Bunyan's release was signed as one item in the rebirth of tolerance that followed the passing of the Conventicle Act two years before. He was forty-four years old.

II

The book which Bunyan had been writing in Bedford jail seems to have been only about two-thirds completed at the moment of his liberation. Freedom evidently retarded composition—freedom and the renewal of labors in the vineyard which came with it. It is altogether likely, too, that even after the manuscript was finished Bunyan delayed some time before he made any effort to get it

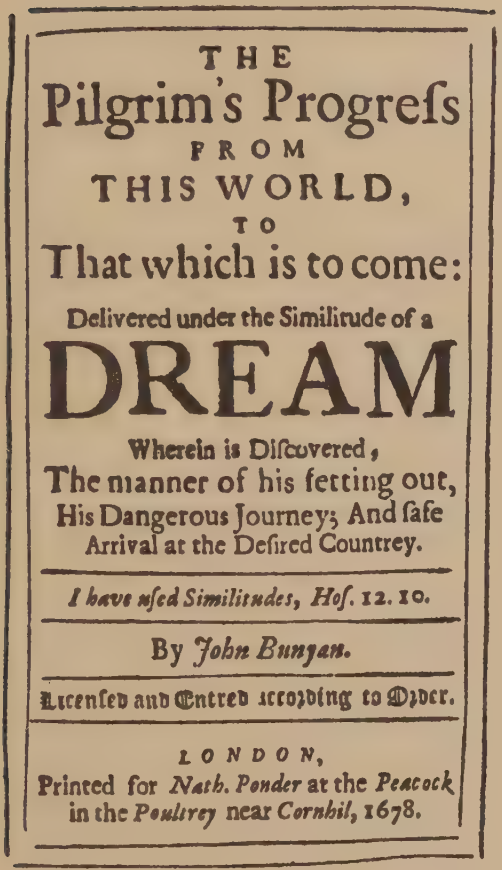
into print. Like a thousand writers of lesser books, he submitted it to his friends for criticism. Such submission is generally good for the vanity and bad for the soul—rare indeed in such a situation is the friend who dares to condemn, rarer yet the author who is not mortally offended thereby. Bunyan's neighbors were of sterner and blunter stuff—they knew nothing about art, but they knew what they liked. Down in London was a sovereign surrounded by yes men (and even more completely by yes women); in Bedfordshire, one said yes only when one meant yes. Bunyan doubtless describes the reception of the manuscript in almost the identical words that greeted it:

> Well, when I had thus put mine ends together,
> I shew'd them others, that I might see whether
> They would condemn them, or them justifie:
> And some said, let them live; some, let them die.
> Some said, John, print it; others said, Not so:
> Some said, It might do good; others said, No.

But in case of a tie the chairman has the deciding vote:

> Now was I in a straight, and did not see
> Which was the best thing to be done by me:
> At last I thought, Since you are thus divided,
> I print it will; and so the case decided.

Five years passed following Bunyan's release from Bedford jail before he journeyed to London in search of a publisher. It is not probable that he had to do much if any shopping about with his manuscript. His fame was already not inconsiderable, and anything he had ready for publication ought to be its own insurance against loss. There is no evidence to show that Bunyan offered his



THE
Pilgrim's Progreſs
FROM
THIS WORLD,
TO
That which is to come:
Delivered under the Similitude of a
DREAM
Wherein is Diſcovered,
The manner of his ſetting out,
His Dangerous Journey; And ſafe
Arrival at the Deſired Countrey.

I have uſed Similitudes, Hoſ. 12. 10.

By *John Bunyan.*

Licenſed and Entred according to Order.

LONDON,
Printed for *Nath. Ponder* at the *Peacock*
in the *Poultrey* near *Cornhil*, 1678.

Only eleven copies of the first edition are known to exist

manuscript to any other publisher than the one who accepted it. This was Nathaniel Ponder, and Bunyan chose him perhaps for the reason that Ponder himself had suffered a term of imprisonment "for carrying to the Presse to be printed an unlicensed Pamphlet tending to Sedition and Defamation of the Christian Religion." Ponder had

proved, however, of smaller moral stature than Bunyan, for sixteen days after his commitment he was discharged "upon his humble petition, setting forth his hearty sorrow for his offence and promising never to offend in like manner." On February 18, 1678, was licensed (Mr. Ponder was playing safe this time) *The Pilgrim's Progress From This World To That which is to come: Delivered under the Similitude of a Dream Wherein is Discovered, The manner of his setting out, His Dangerous Journey; And safe Arrival at the Desired Countrey.*" The price per copy was a shilling sixpence.

The success of the book was immediate and permanent. Two editions were issued in 1678, a third (which is rarer than the first and second) in 1679, a fourth and fifth in 1680, and a sixth in 1681. In the latter year appeared the first known piracy; it is entirely possible that earlier pirated editions were put forth of which no copies survive. Another 1681 piracy boldly carried the imprint of Nathaniel Ponder, and must have been greeted with unchristian invective at the Peacock in the Poultrey, for Ponder had nothing to do with it. By 1685 ten editions had been printed. Then comes an inexplicable gap of two years, for the eleventh edition (1688) did not appear until the year of Bunyan's death. Copies of the seventh to the eleventh editions are by no means so rare as those of several of the earlier editions; each may have been issued in a much larger quantity than the earlier editions and taken a relatively long time to absorb. At all events, by the time he himself set forth on his last dangerous journey Bunyan cannot but have been conscious of assured immortality for his book no less than for himself.

An act of Christian charity (though Christians can claim

no monopoly of charity) led to his death. In the summer of 1688 he made a hurried journey to Reading, site of another famous jail, to try to reconcile a father and son of his acquaintance between whom a serious quarrel had arisen. His mission succeeded, but on his return journey a rainstorm overtook him and drenched him thoroughly before he could find shelter. He reached London and the home of friends, where he halted to recover from the experience, but he never left the house alive. He had given his life to the service of his King—not Charles, gone these three years to whatever hereafter awaited him who "never said a foolish thing and never did a wise one," nor yet the sour James, who may have read *The Pilgrim's Progress* but certainly never profited by it.

III

Bunyan had early envisaged the possibility of a sequel to *The Pilgrim's Progress*. His rhymed conclusion to the book had itself concluded thus:

> What of my dross thou findest there, be bold
> To throw away, but yet preserve the Gold.
> What if my Gold be wrapped up in Ore?
> None throws away the Apple for the Core:
> But if thou shalt cast all away as vain,
> I know not but 'twill make me Dream again.

Part II had appeared in 1684, six years after Part I, then in its ninth edition. The title page was as nearly identical as might be: *The Pilgrim's Progress. From This World to That which is to come. The Second Part. Delivered under the Similitude of a Dream Wherein is set forth The*

manner of the setting out of Christian's Wife and Children, their Dangerous Journey, And Safe Arrival at the Desired Country. By John Bunyan. Bunyan's name appeared in italic capitals—lower case had sufficed for the first edition of Part I. The book was "printed for Nathaniel Ponder," who was still doing business "at the Peacock in the Poultry, near the Church"—more business, undoubtedly, than ever in his life, thanks to the enormous popularity of this same John Bunyan.

An earlier second part, by another hand (that of T. S., who, it should be explained, did not attempt to impute the ownership to Bunyan), had appeared in 1683. T. S., in fact, admitted that he was trying to improve on Bunyan's book, and aimed to "prevent that lightness and laughter which the reading of some passages occasions in some vain and frothy minds"—proof that from the very beginning *The Pilgrim's Progress* was read not as a tract, but as a story. T. S. further hoped that his revision might help along the idea that had been suggested for "the giving of Books of this nature at Funerals, instead of Rings, Gloves, Wine or Bisket." Here is a field of endeavor that present-day booksellers are wofully neglecting.

Bunyan would have liked to write a third part. Part II, which is today little better known than the second part of *Robinson Crusoe,* concludes with these words:

> As for Christian's children, the four Boys that Christiana brought with her, with their Wives and Children, I did not stay where I was, till they were gone over. Also since I came away, I heard one say, that they were yet alive, and so would be for the Increase of the Church in that Place where they were for a time.

BUNYAN IN BEDFORD JAIL

His little blind daughter is about to depart after visiting her father. From the engraving by F. E. Jones after the painting by Duvall

Shall it be my Lot to go that way again, I may give those that desire it, an Account of what I here am silent about; mean time I bid my Reader Adieu.

Five years after Bunyan's death a third part did appear, but it was issued with no such beneficent intentions as T. S.'s second part had been. This attempt to cash in on Bunyan's post-mortem reputation met with more success than such chicanery deserved, for in twenty-five years it went through ten editions as the work of John Bunyan.

IV

Only eleven copies of the first edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress* have survived the hazards of a quarter millenium —only eleven copies, that is to say, are recorded as having survived. A detailed census of these eleven, given in the *Publishers' Weekly* for November 17, 1928, showed that seven are owned in America and four in England. Six of the eleven can be described as perfect in the sense that they are complete; of this select half dozen, three are in America and three in England. Five of the eleven are in institutions and will never come on the market; some of the remaining six will doubtless be presented to libraries in due course; it is not likely that more than three or four of the eleven, if so many, will ever be available to wealthy collectors, be the latter individuals or institutions. When one of these copies some day appears at auction, the struggle for its possession will be a battle of titans, with the bidding perhaps opening at the nominal figure of fifty thousand dollars.

There may, of course, be more than eleven copies of

the first edition in existence. When Robert Southey edited an edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress* in 1830 he declared with complete accuracy that no copy of the first edition was known. In the middle of the century one copy was unearthed; this, the Holford copy, now the property of an American collector, is still regarded as the finest in existence. The discovery of ten more copies within the space of three quarters of a century lends hope to the possibility that others may be brought to light. This hope, human beings being human beings, may perhaps not be shared by the possessors of the eleven known copies.

The eleven and all their unreclaimed and unreclaimable brethren started their careers together, but it is not likely that the little company of survivors will ever be reassembled. In the fall of 1928 the New York Public Library drew on its remarkable collection of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which includes more than five hundred editions and translations in more than forty languages, for a notable public exhibition in honor of the tercentenary of Bunyan's birth. Here, side by side beneath protecting glass, where certainly neither moth nor rust might corrupt, and where thieves might break in and steal only at the risk of gashed wrists, lay two copies of the first edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, brought together again two and a half centuries after leaving the hands of Nathaniel Ponder. No man knows the manner of their setting out or their dangerous journeys (for it is unlikely that they did not many times narrowly escape some of the thousand forces of destruction that overcame all but nine of their brethren). One was the library's own copy —the second to be discovered, in 1851, and the first to come to America—and the other the J. Pierpont Morgan

BUNYAN, FROM THE ENGRAVING BY WHITE

From the first edition of The Holy War (*London, 1682*)

copy, acquired at auction in London in 1907 for £520, and loaned for the tercentenary exhibition in order that one copy might be shown opened at the title-page and the other at the first text page:

> As I walk'd through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place, where was a Denn; And I laid me down in that place to sleep: And as I slept I dreamed a Dream. I dreamed, and behold *I saw a Man cloathed with Raggs, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own House, a Book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back.*

The whole romance of book-collecting hovers over the eleventh recorded copy of the first edition, which came to light in 1922. An English barber, a lifelong resident of Derby, kept a few books in his shop which he sometimes glanced at in the intervals between customers. His wife fell ill, and the barber brought her a little light reading from the front room. The doctor arrived to find his patient puzzling over the antique s's in a copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. He picked it up as she laid it down—a few words about what she was reading might help to take her mind off her troubles. The doctor's bedside manner deserted him immediately. Himself an amateur of books, he was certain that there was something unusual about this one. It ought to be shipped to Sotheby's, he said—they would know if it was worth anything, and he was sure it was. Sotheby's agreed with him. The book was worth at least £900, they reported. They would be glad to dispose of it at auction—and they did, to Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach of New York and Philadelphia, for some £2500. It was not a perfect copy; otherwise it might have fetched £10,000 even in that distant day of bargain books.

V

The short space of three years intervened between the publication of the first English edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and the first American edition; the latter, antedating as it did every European edition, enjoys the distinction of having been the first edition to be produced outside the British Isles. It was printed by Samuel Green of Cambridge, successor to that Stephen Daye whose *Whole Booke of Psalmes,* better known as the *Bay Psalm Book,* published in 1640, is the most coveted and desirable of books printed in the New World, and the earliest surviving book printed in what is now the United States. Green, a better printer than Daye, had issued the Reverend John Eliot's Bible in the Indian tongue complete eighteen years earlier—the first Bible to be printed in the Western Hemisphere. "Behold, ye Americans, the greatest honor that ever you were partakers of!" exclaimed Cotton Mather of this noble undertaking. Few men since the invention of printing have had a hand in the writing, translating or editing of more rare books than Eliot. Several productions of the earliest Massachusetts printers in the preparation of which Eliot had a hand survive as unique copies; others which certainly once existed do not survive at all. It was a rude day, a devout day, and its books were made to be read and reread. The marvel, perhaps, is not that only three copies of the first American edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress* still exist, but that so many as three exist. Two of them wear severe scars of time and usage; one of these is in the Boston Public Library, and the other, a fragment, in the library of the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester. The

only surviving copy which merits the designation perfect is in the Huntington Library at San Bernardino, California. Sixty years elapsed after the publication of the first English edition of Part II before an American edition was issued at Boston (1744).

The Pilgrim's Progress has been translated into more languages and dialects than any book save the Bible. There have been a dozen or more metrical versions in English, the first appearing as early as 1698. Of adaptations and abridgments there have been versions almost without number. The earliest translation was published in 1682 at Amsterdam; it is impossible, in this instance, to beat the Dutch. At least seven Netherland cities, in fact—as many (though not in the Netherlands) as claimed Homer as a native son—were represented at the foot of title-pages of early issues of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. A French translation appeared in 1685; there may have been one a year earlier of which no copy survives. A German edition followed in 1703, translated from the Dutch. Today *The Pilgrim's Progress* can be read in dozens of African, American Indian and Hindu dialects. It is available in Hebrew, and it was early adapted for reading by Roman Catholics. For the burden that Christian carried presses on the back of every man; whatever his tongue or color or creed, he must climb the hill Difficulty to glimpse, shining above the lowering mists of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the golden rim of the Delectable Mountains.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON AND *THE BIRDS OF AMERICA*

I

JEAN JACQUES FOUGÈRE AUDUBON was born at Les Cayes, Santo Domingo, on April 26, 1785. Until a few years ago it was assumed that he was a native of Louisiana, and John Burroughs, in his brief study of the naturalist, gave his birth year as 1780. In 1917 appeared Dr. Francis Hobart Herrick's definitive biography to shed the clear light of certainty on the matter. By one of those apparent strokes of good luck which are in reality the reward of conscientious investigation intelligently directed, Dr. Herrick discovered the actual doctor's bill rendered the elder Audubon to cover professional services at Les Cayes extending over two years. These services included two full nights spent at the bedside of a creole woman "now known only by the name of Mlle. Rabin" in the moment of her direst need. Sundry post-accouchement attentions brought the total for this section of the bill up to between two and three hundred francs—not a small figure for the time, one imagines, but then M. Audubon could well afford it. In fact, the name of Mlle. Rabin recurs frequently in the doctor's statement thereafter—for the last time on August 15th. Toward the end of that year or early in 1786 Mlle. Rabin died.

Four years later Jean Jacques Audubon went to France by way of America. He was young, but twice as old as the Constitution of the United States. In 1803, when he returned to America, he was twice as old as the troublous new France. Audubon grew up in a day when history was in the tumultuous making, but it was all little concern of his. His interests were to center in phenomena compared to which the crash of dynasties was of infinitely less significance than the rustle of a wind-stirred leaf.

He returned to America, in his own words, "to make money." The idea was his father's; John James did not possess the knack at the moment, and ever afterward employed such mastery of it as he ever attained only in furtherance of his great plan. He brought with him from France whatever benefits accrued from a better than ordinary education indifferently heeded and no knowledge of English. Most important of all, from no point of view but his own, he carried a few drawings of French birds—he had studied for a time under David, the outstanding French artist of the Revolutionary era. Settling near Philadelphia (if so static a term as settle may be used to characterize Audubon at any instant of his career before his last days), he met and soon became engaged to a young Englishwoman bearing the pleasantly domestic designation of Lucy Green Bakewell.

Before their marriage in 1808 Audubon had gone to France and returned to America a second time. With him came Ferdinand Rozier, between whom and Audubon the latter's father had effected a partnership arrangement. More important to one of the partners than the elaborate articles of association and powers of attorney

which bolstered the enterprise was another batch of drawings depicting some two hundred species of French birds.

It is not necessary to follow in detail the disheartening pilgrimage beyond the Alleghanies of the Rozier-Audubon combination in search of fortune. It must have been especially disheartening to Rozier, who did not draw. To Audubon, however, every stopping place in the wilderness offered the certainty of new models. As commerce waned, art flourished. Eventually they coalesced, and he began to turn his talents to making portraits at five dollars a head and up. Soon after this, in 1819, he secured a place as taxidermist at the Western Museum in Cincinnati. His arrest and imprisonment for debt at Louisville—he had won his freedom only by declaring himself a bankrupt—had provided the coup de grâce to his business career. At Cincinnati, in addition to his services at the museum, he made more crayon portraits of local sitters and even opened a drawing school.

The proved fact that by his talents he could make a living anywhere was probably a powerful factor in his decision to try to get his bird drawings published—a decision that seems to have taken definite form in his mind at about this time. For by journeying far afield he could sketch the backwoods nobility wherever he went, and then, with board and lodging assured, devote himself to his heart's work in the adjacent woods and marshes. In this manner he would in time possess a portfolio whose contents would embrace well nigh all the birds in the explored portions of the United States.

II

It was after four years of wandering, observing and painting that Audubon arrived in Philadelphia in April, 1824, in quest of a publisher for his drawings. Philadelphia was then the publishing capital of the hemisphere, but it was still not quite equal to doing justice to Audubon's work. The most helpful suggestion he received from local scientists (whose sentiments ranged all the way from unstinted admiration to spiteful jealousy) was that he try his luck in Europe. Not until two years later, however, did he actually embark—in the interval he had visited upstate New York (including Niagara Falls, sixteen years after his honeymoon), Lakes Ontario and Champlain, the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys, and Louisiana, where he rejoined his much-enduring and much-traveled wife. The next few months he devoted to amassing funds for the European trip. Not the least productive source of revenue was his dancing class of sixty pupils, no one of whom was quite such an adept as their instructor.

Audubon sailed from New Orleans on May 17, 1826. There was no *Bremen* in those days—the *Delos* did not reach Liverpool until July 21st. The voyage was put to good account; when the schooner was becalmed the friendly officers occasionally let down a boat so that the talented and good-natured passenger might sketch sea fowl.

Arrived in England, Audubon made haste to present the credentials—"a crowd of letters," one acquaintance called them—with which friends and admirers, many of them influential, had fortified him. The most important of these, it proved, was one to Richard Rathbone of Liver-

pool, merchant. To Rathbone and his family, records Dr. Herrick, "Audubon, with his fine enthusiasm and bold literary plans, seemed to embody all the romance of the New World." Richard Rathbone's sister-in-law, Mrs. William Rathbone, "his excellent hostess . . . received from him lessons in drawing and became his first subscriber."

So great was the prestige which the intelligent admiration of the Rathbones and others lent his cause that only a few days elapsed before Audubon was invited to exhibit his drawings at the Royal Institution. The month's showing netted him £100—and this despite the fact that no admission was charged during the opening week. Had the crowds that inspected the drawings known the full story of the vicissitudes they had endured, they would have seen in them and the naturalist-artist an even greater degree of "the romance of the New World." Some of the drawings had traveled over most of the then inhabited United States. One batch had been sorely damaged by the spilling of a bottle of gun-powder. Once "a pair of Norway rats" had nested in a portfolio which Audubon left behind on one of his journeys, "and reared a young family among gnawed bits of paper which but a month previous represented nearly one thousand inhabitants of the air." Nine years later a New York fire was to consume many drawings which he had stored there before embarking on a second journey to England and Scotland. And ten years later still another New York fire was to destroy many of the copper engravings which had been used for the original work, the adventures of which were only less strange than those of the drawings themselves.

After three months spent in England, mostly in Liver-

pool and Manchester, Audubon journeyed to Edinburgh, where he met William Home Lizars, painter, engraver, and instantly-won admirer. Lizars, who had had a hand in various publishing ventures, agreed to get out a specimen number of *The Birds of America*. Before the end of November he was able to show a proof of the wild turkey cock. Early in 1827 the five plates for the first number of the venture were ready.

It were well to detail here the specifications for Audubon's prodigious undertaking in Audubon's own words. The following "Particulars of the Plan of the Work" are from a prospectus drafted at London some months later, when ten numbers had been completed:

> The Engravings in every instance to be of the exact dimensions of the Drawings, which, without any exception, represent the Birds of their natural size.
>
> The Plates will be coloured, in the most careful manner, from the original Drawings.
>
> The Size of the work will be Double Elephant, and printed on the finest Drawing Paper.
>
> Five Plates will constitute a Number; one Plate from one of the largest Drawings, one from one of the second size, and three from the smaller Drawings.
>
> There are 400 Drawings; and it is proposed that they shall comprise Three Volumes, each containing about 133 Plates, to which an Index will be given at the end of each, to be bound up with the Volume.
>
> Five Numbers will come out annually.
>
> The Price of each Number will be Two Guineas; payable on delivery.

The work, then, was to be sixteen years in the making, and would sell for some one hundred and sixty guineas. Actually the end was reached in twelve years, and the

THE WILD TURKEY PLATE

The first volume of The Birds of America, *opened to display the most famous and desirable of the illustrations. The large closed book is a volume of the* Quadrupeds. *The three tall volumes in front of it contain the text of the* Quadrupeds, *the five smaller volumes the text of the* Birds. *The three volumes on the upper shelves of the table contain plates of the* Birds, *the two volumes on the lower shelf plates of the* Quadrupeds. *From the collection of the C. E. Lauriat Company of Boston*

cost to each subscriber was £182 14s. in England and one thousand dollars in America.

III

"The Plates will be coloured." It was the heyday of the colored-plate book. The year which saw the appearance of the first number of *The Birds of America* signalized also the death of Thomas Rowlandson, who had reached the height of his fame as the conceiver of the various *Tours of Dr. Syntax* between 1812 and 1821. George Cruikshank, with half a century of busy handiwork ahead of him, had recently completed some of the most notable work of his career with Grimm's *German Popular Stories;* Henry Alken's masterpieces were eight years away, but he was already great. The flourishing arts of lithography and steel engraving were younger than any of these great exponents of the technique of illustrating. Of vast importance was the fact that hand-coloring had been put on an economic basis that made it cheaper than actual printing in color—a condition, of course, by no means true today. No less an artist than J. M. W. Turner (whose severest detractor cannot deny that he had a superb eye for superb color) began his career as a simple colorist.

The Napoleonic wars had flooded England with refugees much as the recent Russian revolution flooded the rest of Europe. Most of them, desperately poor, knew only the trade of lady or gentleman. The coloring profession could hardly absorb all of them, but it absorbed enough of them to raise the expensive picture book to a pinnacle of glory, mainly owing to the enterprise of

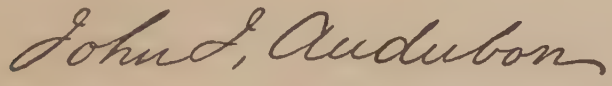
Rudolph Ackermann. The son of a Saxon carriage-builder, Ackermann migrated to London in 1795 after serving his apprenticeship under his father, and the only carriage thereafter distinctively associated with his name was Lord Nelson's hearse. His establishment gave employment to upward of fifty émigrés—some of them quondam noblemen and noblewomen — at first in the decoration of household ornaments. In 1808 he turned his attention to colored books, and from then until his death in 1834 he devoted himself assiduously and successfully to this pursuit. Nowhere does he specifically touch the story of Audubon, save for the impetus he gave to the art and the industry of colored pictures, but that influence was so important that it must be considered in any attempt to explain the artistic and commercial atmosphere in which Audubon worked.

Audubon went on to make his conquest of London in May. His provincial and Scottish tour had been a triumphal progress. He had been fêted everywhere; he had been taken to the bosom of influential societies; his drawings had won enthusiastic approbation on all sides; he had received orders for some sets of plates—not too many, but enough to lend good heart to his endeavor. Many an applicant for employment or favor "comes well recommended," but the championship of all time may well be Audubon's. He bore with him to London sixty or more letters to English notables, and "nearly a trunkful for the Continent."

All went well for a month or so; then came a letter from Lizars announcing disaffection among his followers, followed by further discouraging communications which

culminated in Lizars tossing the whole project overboard.

'Tis better to have tried and failed, but it is bitter to have failure postponed until the striver is on the threshold of success. Audubon "closed his journal on the second day of July with the remark that he was too dull and mournful to write a line, and it was not opened again for nearly three months."



But great events came to pass in the interval that is covered by this silence. In June, when Lizars had begun to register dismay and had imparted the sensation to Audubon, the latter began to investigate the London engraving situation. "I went five times to see Mr. Havell, the colorer, but he was out of town. I am full of anxiety and greatly depressed. Oh! how sick I am of London!" Mr. Havell, the colorer, was Robert Havell, Senior. His father had been an engraver before him; Havell himself planned to have two of his sons become artists after him, choosing to have a third, Robert Junior, adopt another calling. The family tradition was too strong; in 1825 Robert Havell, Junior, then thirty-two years old, broke with his father, went on an extended sketching tour, and ultimately gravitated to London, where his conspicuous talents won him a place with the firm of Colnaghi and Company.

On his sixth visit—or perhaps an even later one—Audubon found the elder Havell in. The latter's enthusiasm for the drawings was genuine, but he protested that he was too old to assume the burden of making the en-

gravings—at fifty-eight one does not embark on an enterprise that may require half a generation of skilful craftsmanship to consummate. He would, however, turn his knowledge of the London engraving profession to Audubon's account and try to find a man for him. Accordingly he visited Colnaghi and Company, and was shown an unsigned proof of a landscape done by a member of their staff. Just the man! "Then send for your own son," he was told. It is pleasant to note that a reconciliation followed, and equally pleasant to record that the man who was to carry *The Birds of America* through to glorious completion had been found.

Any doubts concerning young Havell's fitness were set at rest a few days later when he showed Audubon a proof of his first engraving. Father and son stood anxiously aside while the naturalist inspected the result. The inspection was long, and doubtless seemed to the Havells to occupy more time than it actually did. Finally Audubon seized the drawing and began to dance about the room, crying in a marked French accent: "The jig is up! The jig is up!" The Havells, according to George Alfred Williams's engaging study of the son, "first thought this meant that the work was unsatisfactory," proving thereby that their knowledge of the American language surpassed the American's, "but Audubon, throwing his arms around Havell, Junior, embraced him in genuine enthusiasm and gave ample evidence that he had found his engraver." The friendship of the two men was a strong influence in Havell's ultimate decision to come to America, where he settled with his wife at Sing Sing (now Ossining), New York, later moving five miles down the Hudson to Tarrytown, where he died in 1878.

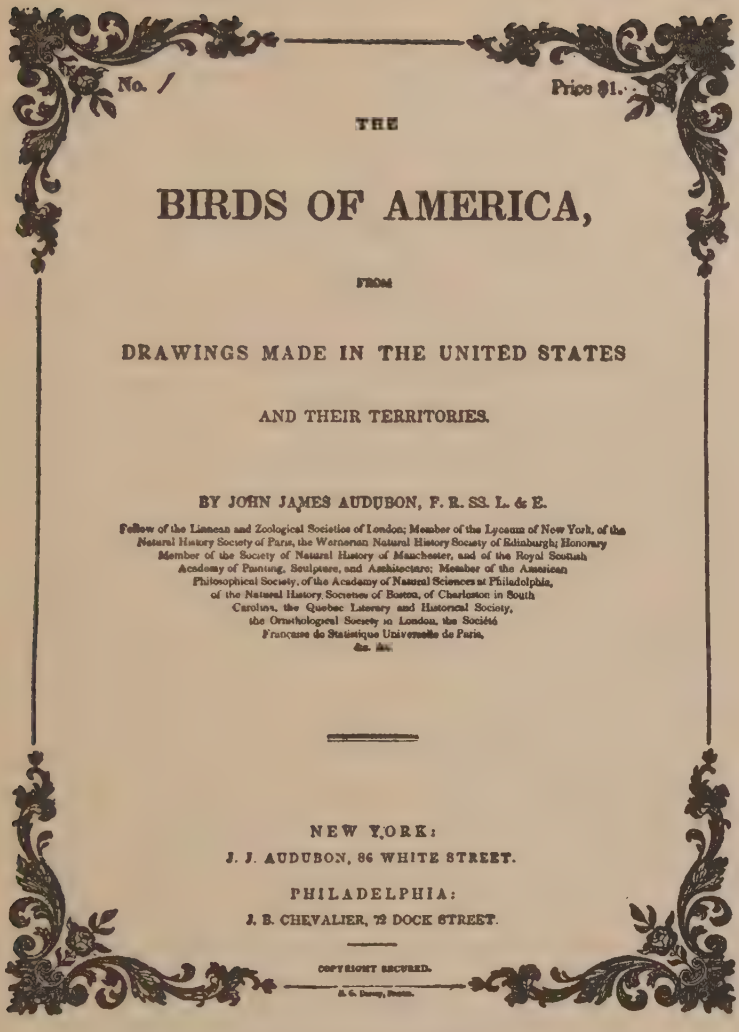
IV

The ten years that followed the beginning of the affiliation with Havell were a period of ceaseless vigilance and struggle, with the fate of a hundred-thousand-dollar enterprise in the balance. There were times when Audubon found cause for complaint in the work of even such a master as Havell. "Were you here and lessen to what my subscribers say," Audubon wrote him from Manchester on June 10, 1830, "it would make you quite sick. I saw this day several plates of the Baltimore Orioles with the hanging nest no more like my Drawing than a Chimney Sweep is to your beautiful wife — The Colourers must either be more careful or I must turn them all off. . . . I am now well aware that was the colouring good and all alike instead of having lost 8 Subscribers here I would have had an Increase of 20." Five months later, however, with the arrival of the nineteenth number, he was able to write to Havell from Edinburgh: "I have examined the plates of this No. with much attention along with several of my friends and you are congratulated by all of us for the delicacy of their finish and softness. . . . I look to the 2d volume as the finest Book in the World!" On June 16, 1832, he urged Havell from Philadelphia to speed No. 28: "Pray do not lose a moment and recollect that all you send to this country is closely Scrutinized and that the engravers here are as Jealous as the Naturalist." The same sentiment was in his mind when, three years later, he found substance for criticism in the engraving for the plates of No. 53: "I sincerely wish that not one of those had been sent to America."

Not until June 20, 1838, was the last plate completed.

Dr. Herrick summarizes the accomplishment thus: "Having been begun virtually in the autumn of 1826, [*The Birds of America*] was in press nearly twelve years. The sumptuous character of this work, its commanding beauty, as well as its surprising accuracy, considering all the obstacles of time and circumstance, mark it, when combined with its letterpress, as one of the most remarkable and interesting undertakings in the history of literature and science in the nineteenth century. Unique as it was in every detail of its workmanship, it will remain for centuries a shining example of the triumph of human endeavor and of the spirit and will of man."

It is a truism of the rare-book trade that a large book is less likely to approach relative scarcity than a small book. On this basis *The Birds of America* is never likely to fall into such a category as is occupied, say, by the earliest issues of *The New England Primer*. The plates, untrimmed, measure 39½ by 29½ inches, or nearly eight square feet. The number of original sets issued was probably under two hundred. Many sets have been broken up for the individual plates, of which the most desirable is Plate Number One—Lizars's engraving of the wild turkey cock. This plate is also the key to a perfect copy of the book; serving as the frontispiece, it was subjected to hardest treatment; in fact, merely turning the leaves of *The Birds of America* requires much the same degree (and much the same kind) of skill as making a bed. A complete set of the work is now worth rather more than any but the most expensive cars—a New York bookseller recently catalogued one, complete with text, at $675c. The first American edition was published in 1840–1844 in seven octavo volumes of text and plates. This edition


No. /
Price $1.
THE
BIRDS OF AMERICA,
FROM
DRAWINGS MADE IN THE UNITED STATES
AND THEIR TERRITORIES.
BY JOHN JAMES AUDUBON, F. R. SS. L. & E.
Fellow of the Linnean and Zoological Societies of London; Member of the Lyceum of New York, of the Natural History Society of Paris, the Wernerian Natural History Society of Edinburgh; Honorary Member of the Society of Natural History of Manchester, and of the Royal Scottish Academy of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture; Member of the American Philosophical Society, of the Academy of Natural Sciences at Philadelphia, of the Natural History Societies of Boston, of Charleston in South Carolina, the Quebec Literary and Historical Society, the Ornithological Society in London, the Société Française de Statistique Universelle de Paris, &c. &c.
NEW YORK:
J. J. AUDUBON, 86 WHITE STREET.
PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. CHEVALIER, 72 DOCK STREET.
COPYRIGHT SECURED.

WRAPPER OF THE FIRST AMERICAN EDITION

Published between 1840 and 1844, both in parts and in seven octavo volumes of text and plates. The work is, of course, much scarcer in the former state

sells for from $300 to $700; a copy in the original unbound parts brought $1050 at auction early in 1926.

Much is written and much more is said about the desirability of rare books as an investment. True, a *Pickwick* acquired at a shilling a part in 1836 and 1837 would have come to represent a more desirable investment today than if an equivalent total had been put out at interest and left to increase and multiply for three generations. Audubon's *Birds,* however, is something of an exception. Its value today—say from $5000 to $7500—may look impressive enough, and is. But let it be remembered that the complete work cost a thousand dollars on publication, and that a thousand dollars put in a savings bank in 1838 and left there by a succession of heirs with an abnormal concern for posterity would now amount to around $25,000. All of which bears no slightest relation to the importance of Audubon's great triumph as a monument in the progress of ornithology and bookmaking, and proves only that the study of books as articles of commerce can best be left to booksellers.

Audubon was fifty-three when *The Birds of America* was completed. The story of his remaining years is the inevitable anticlimax to a youth and middle life devoted to such ardent and adventurous endeavor. Yet it is anticlimactic only by comparison, for not until nearly ten years later was he done with explorations and researches when, with *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of America* (in collaboration with John Bachman) well under way, his mind began to fail him while his body was still vigorous. He died in New York in 1851, "one of the most winsome, interesting, and picturesque characters," declared John Burroughs, "that has ever appeared in our annals."

ROBERT BURNS AND HIS *POEMS*

I

MOSSGIEL lies a mile or so north of Mauchline, and Mauchline is some fifty miles from Carlisle, across the only bound of Scotland that is not determined by water. From Mauchline to Kilmarnock is under ten miles—a matter of minutes today, by rail or motor, and certainly, in 1786, hardly more than three hours afoot to the most indifferent walker.

Jean Armour the master mason's daughter and Farmer Robert Burns could hardly be said to appertain to the same social circles even in a community of such restricted population and comparative homogeneity as Mauchline. Burns's status may have been humble enough in that rustic hierarchy, but he belonged to the grand aristocracy of the world's lovers, and who shall blame eighteen-year-old Jean for a clairvoyance beyond her years and her environment that enabled her to recognize it? The fact, all too patent as the fateful year of 1786 grew toward summer, that Farmer Burns was about to become a father wore not even the aspect of novelty to that irresponsible son of the stubborn Ayrshire furrows with his fondness for a glass and a lass. There was a girl named Paton, and there was a daughter Elizabeth, but that was another, a slightly older story. That crisis, at any rate, was over

and done—but "forward, tho' I canna see, I guess an' fear."

And with some justice. The fact that Jean was with child once established, Burns in manly wise gave her documentary acknowledgment that she was his wife. Even this impressive testimony, however, failed to move the master mason. His was a small puddle, but he was a large frog in it, and the thought of admitting the Mossgiel husbandman to a basis of equality, particularly by compulsion, was repugnant on various grounds. There were the social and the economic barriers, doughty enough in whatsoever time and clime, and there was the religious barrier, always doughtier yet. The elder Armour was of the auld licht—a bedrock Calvinist. "I now began to be known in the neighborhood as a maker of rhymes," Burns wrote later of this critical epoch. "The first of my poetic offspring that saw light was a burlesque lamentation of a quarrel between two reverent Calvinists. . . . With a certain description of the clergy as well as the laity, it met with a roar of applause." To which, it may be imagined, Master Mason Armour contributed no tiniest atom of sound.

The upshot of the business was that Jean, at her father's insistence, surrendered to Burns the paper he had given her, whereat he erroneously concluded that his responsibility in the matter was at an end, proving thus that he was better farmer than lawyer. In June he declared in writing that "I do still love her to distraction after all, though I won't tell her so if I were to see her." This was just as well, because only a few days before uttering these words, according to the best available evidence, he and Mary Campbell—Highland Mary—had stood on opposite sides

of a tiny tributary of the Ayr and sworn eternal fidelity on a Bible held over the water. Five months later Mary was dead, and what John Gibson Lockhart has called the deepest passion that Burns ever knew had become a memory and an inspiration for one of the most beautiful elegies in literature:

Thou ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget,
Can I forget the hallow'd grove,
Where, by the winding Ayr, we met,
To live one day of parting love!
Eternity can not efface
Those records dear of transports past,
Thy image at our last embrace,
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Armour père might have been even more indignant if he had known about Mary. It was bad enough, however, as things were. There would be no Burns in the family, but this was not to absolve the sacrilegious rhymester from responsibility for the care of Jean's child. A warrant was issued to compel Burns to give security for the support of the impending offspring, and for some weeks he became as evanescent a corporeality as a latter-day oil baron pursued by a subpoena. During some part of that

troublous summer he did penance in the church at Mauchline in the fond assumption that he would emerge from his mental and spiritual travail a bachelor. One may here anticipate and say that it was not to be. Robert Burns and Jean Armour were indissolubly man and wife, and so remained until his death ten years later—far from the world's unhappiest marriage, as the world's marriages go.

In a letter which happens to have been written later, but which might very well have been set down at this period, Burns said:

> I have been this morning taking a peep through, as Young finely says, "the dark postern of time long elapsed"; and you will easily guess 'twas a rueful prospect: what a tissue of thoughtlessness, weakness, and folly! My life reminded me of a ruined temple; what strength, what proportion in some parts! what unsightly gaps, what prostrate ruins in others! I kneeled down before the Father of Mercies, and said: "Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." I rose eased and strengthened. I despise the superstition of a fanatic, but I love the religion of a man.

II

The vindictiveness of the elder Armour, excusable though it was, drove his de facto son-in-law to distraction. Enter the scene, at this panicky juncture, a god from the machine named Douglas. Little is known about him; there have always been a superabundance of Douglases in Scotland, and research does not seem to have sufficiently segregated this particular Douglas from the rest of the clan. He could assure Burns a place as a bookkeeper in Jamaica. To the folk of Mauchline Jamaica seemed as far away as the South Pole, but this factor was a supreme

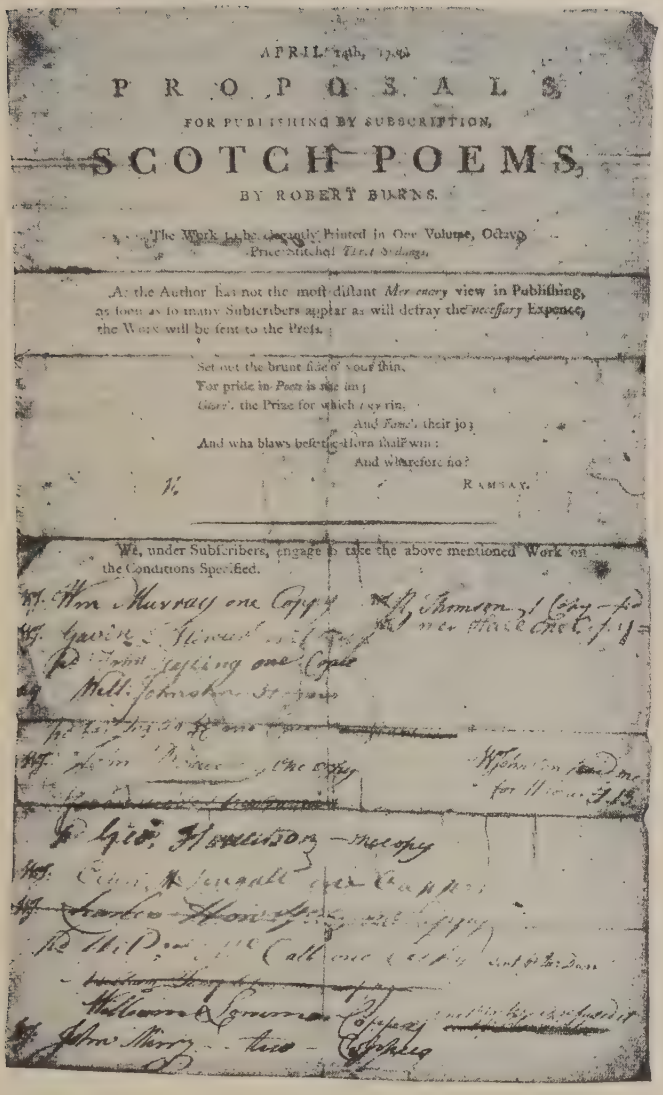
recommendation in Burns's eyes. He was all eagerness to be off—and all despair at wondering where on earth he would find nine guineas passage money.

Publish your poems, suggested Gavin Hamilton. Gavin owned the clayey Mossgiel acres which Robert and his brother Gilbert tilled as renters. He seems to have been an ideal landlord, which would in itself constitute a superior claim to notice, but he might have been a Caledonian Simon Legree and still merit all approbation, for he gave the world a poet. There is no evidence that he knew anything about publishing, or anything about poetry beyond the verses his tenant had recited to him. But he had faith in his man, and when the publishing venture was decided on in the spring of 1786 he gave practical proof of that faith. No friend of Burns's worked harder to secure subscribers for the projected book. Hamilton lacked the means, perhaps, to go as far as Parker of Kilmarnock, who signed up for thirty-five copies. Who knows?—Parker's enthusiasm may have been the mere self-gratulatory gesture of affluence; his thirty-five copies may repose to this day in a Dumbartonshire garret with the string that surrounded them still intact—treasure of vaster moment than the average-size chest filled with pieces of eight. It is not at all likely, but it is pleasant to linger over the possibility.

John Wilson of Kilmarnock undertook the print job. The book was three months in press—three bitter and anguished months for Burns, with the Armour crisis perpetually popping about his ears. Was the elder Armour, one wonders, confronted with a copy of "Proposals for publishing by subscription Scotch poems by Robert Burns. The work to be elegantly printed in One Volume Octavo,

Price Stitched Three Shillings"? If he did, is it not more than likely that he tore it up and scattered the bits to the winds to the accompaniment of words that no adherent of the auld licht should utter? Only a single copy of this prospectus survives, safely housed in the Burns Cottage at Alloway and not likely ever to leave the guardianship of its devoted trustees. It contains this remarkable declaration: "As the Author has not the most distant *Mercenary* view in Publishing, as soon as so many Subscribers appear as will defray the *necessary* Expense, the Work will be sent to the Press." This statement, of course, meant nothing, or no more than the customary only-a-few-copies-left appeal of much bookselling (or, with the text altered to suit, of many other kinds of selling)—it was thrown in almost mechanically, in all probability, by Printer Wilson. But its inclusion must have been something of a shock to Burns, whose commercialism extended only to the limit of the essential nine guineas, to which extent he was the embodiment of the very spirit of commercialism.

Hamilton and other friends toiled so assiduously that when *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* was issued on July 31, 1786, some three hundred and fifty copies of the slightly more than six hundred which made up the edition had been subscribed. The rest were soon taken up, the resulting profit to the author being some twenty pounds—and assured immortality. Obviously John Wilson himself did not lose by the undertaking. Moreover, it brought him considerable new business, for within a few weeks humble poetasters throughout the region were scraping their pence together and dashing into print, not a few of them by way of John Wilson. Universal became "that dearest wish of every poetic bosom—to be dis-



APRIL 14th, 1786.

PROPOSALS

FOR PUBLISHING BY SUBSCRIPTION,

SCOTCH POEMS,

BY ROBERT BURNS.

The Work to be decently Printed in One Volume, Octavo.
Price sticht'd *Three Shillings.*

As the Author has not the most distant *Mercenary* view in Publishing, as soon as so many Subscribers appear as will defray the *necessary* Expence, the Work will be sent to the Press.

Set out the brunt side o' your thin,
For pride in *Poets* is nae sin;
Glore, the Prize for which ye rin,
And *Fame*, their joy;
And wha blaws best o' horn shall win:
And wherefore no?

RAMSAY.

We, under Subscribers, engage to take the above mentioned Work on the Conditions Specified.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM FOR THE KILMARNOCK BURNS

Several of these blanks must have been circulated in the neighborhood, but only the one here shown survives. It is now in the Burns Cottage at Alloway

tinguished," as the preface to the Burns collection phrased it. The preface concluded as follows: "He begs his readers, particularly the Learned and the Polite, who may honor him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for Education and Circumstances of Life: but, if after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of Dullness and Nonsense, let him be done by, as he would in that case do by others—let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion."

That twenty pounds profit was sufficient recompense for the moment—it was more than twice the cost of a passage to Jamaica. Burns signed over the profits from his copyright, if the future were to bring any, to his little daughter by Elizabeth Paton. His chest had already been dispatched to Greenock, whence his ship would sail early in September, he "had taken the last farewell of my friends" (not too openly, the Armourian wrath still being at high pitch)—and he never saw Jamaica.

By Burns's own account, "a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes." Thomas Blacklock was a blind Scottish poet, sixty-five years old in this fateful year of 1786, a man of considerable cultural influence and following in the capital city of Edinburgh. There is no line of his in the four thousand pages of *The Home Book of Verse*, none in Sir George Douglas's nine-hundred-page *Book of Scottish Poetry*, wherein more than a hundred of his compatriots are represented. Burns himself, consciously or otherwise, may have dramatized Blacklock's importance in the passage just quoted. It would be more accurate to credit Blacklock with contributing a ponderable share of the accumulation of influences which were to direct Burns's footsteps to Edinburgh and

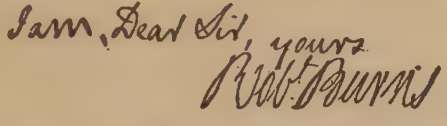
fame instead of to the West Indies, "contempt and oblivion."

Carlyle's summary of Burns's Edinburgh sojourn is famous if not perhaps altogether accurate:

> A somewhat clearer knowledge of men's affairs, scarcely of their characters, this winter in Edinburgh did afford him; but a sharper feeling of Fortune's unequal arrangements in their social destiny it also left with him. He had seen the gay and gorgeous arena, in which the powerful are born to play their parts; nay, had himself stood in the midst of it; and he felt more bitterly than ever that here he was but a looker-on, and had no part or lot in that splendid game. From this time a jealous indignant fear of social degradation takes possession of him; and perverts, so far as aught could pervert, his private contentment, and his feelings towards his richer fellows. It was clear to Burns that he had talent enough to make a fortune, or a hundred fortunes, could he but have rightly willed this. It was clear also that he willed something far different, and therefore could not make one. Unhappy it was that he had not power to choose the one and reject the other, but must halt forever between two opinions, two objects; making hampered advancement towards either. But so it is with many men: "we long for the merchandise, yet would fain keep the price"; and so stand chaffering with Fate, in vexatious altercation, till the night come, and our fair is over!

From the point of view of posterity, however, the principal result of Burns's triumphal progress through the capital was a second edition of his poems. It was published in April, 1787, some fifteen hundred subscribers taking up twenty-eight hundred copies, and Burns's profits from it amounted to about five hundred pounds. This original Edinburgh publication of the poems exists in two states, and considerable bibliographical warfare has been waged in an effort to determine which is prior to the

other. The weight of collecting tradition is largely in favor of what is somewhat startlingly referred to as the "stinking" issue. In the lines "To a Haggis" (a delicacy which is related both etymologically and gastronomically to hash) the word "skinking" (thin) occurs, or was meant to occur, on page 263, but evidently a compositor who was better acquainted with unadorned Anglo-Saxon than with the Scottish dialect thought otherwise. Whether he thought so before or after "skinking" was in type is the



whole problem. The logical conclusion is that the first reading was "stinking" and that it was detected and corrected, and this is probably what happened, though investigation has shown that the puzzle may not be quite so elementary. It is certain, however, that the type was entirely reset between issues—in other words, the two issues are actually two distinct editions. The "stinking" edition generally sells for around two hundred dollars, about twice the market value of the "skinking" edition.

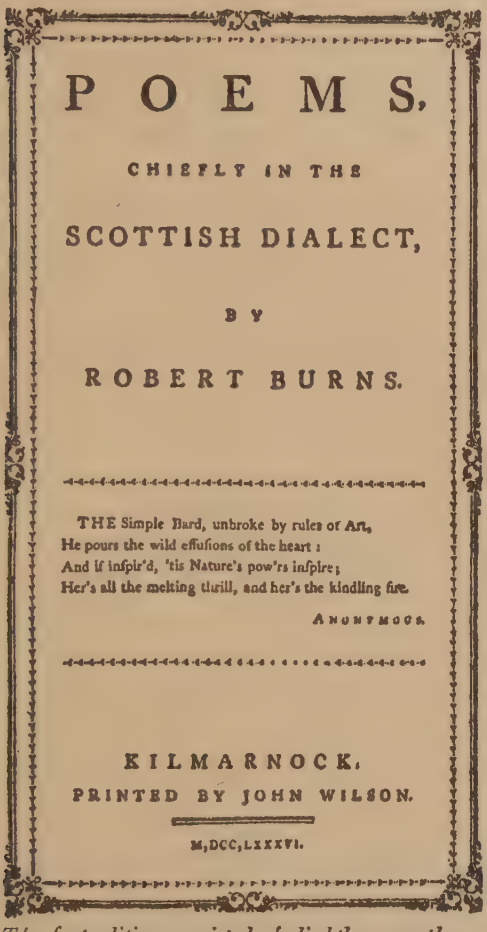
Most important of the influences that sent Burns to Edinburgh, perhaps, was the immediate spread of his fame throughout his own neighborhood. Burns became a prophet endowed with vast honor in his own country, especially in his own humble corner of it. It would hardly be safe to slander Robert Burns in an Ayrshire or Dumbartonshire tavern today; it is of rather more significance that it would not have been safe to slander Robert Burns in an Ayrshire or Dumbartonshire tavern in the late summer of 1786.

How may all this acclamation have affected the course of affairs in the Armour household? Did it ease Jean's natural forebodings to know that the father of her coming child had become a great man of the countryside? Her own private crisis came in due course, and is thus recorded in Burns's hand in the Bible which he bought two years later from Peter Hill of Edinburgh—which "truly elegant" volume, as he called it, is now in the Burns Cottage at Alloway: "Septr. 3d, 1786, were born to them twins, Robert, their eldest Son, at a quarter past Noon; & Jean, since dead at fourteen months old." Burns paid two pounds for the Bible; the Cottage trustees acquired it in 1904 for seventeen hundred.

III

Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect is a cumbersome title, and the great book has come down in history and will endure into eternity as the Kilmarnock Burns. What other town in the whole history of bibliography enjoys a proximate distinction? No one ever refers to the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* as the Brooklyn Whitman, or to the original *Vicar of Wakefield* as the Salisbury Goldsmith. But no one ever refers to the Kilmarnock Burns by any other name, and the busy little provincial metropolis that is Kilmarnock today is happy in the knowledge that the chief spring of its fame is the attic that was John Wilson's print shop.

The Kilmarnock Burns is a sturdy, well-printed volume of two hundred and forty pages, including a five-page glossary. Of its thirty-six poems the best known are *The Cotter's Saturday Night, To a Mouse, To a Mountain Daisy* and *To a Louse*. The book thus enshrines, on page



POEMS,

CHIEFLY IN THE

SCOTTISH DIALECT,

BY

ROBERT BURNS.

THE Simple Bard, unbroke by rules of Art,
He pours the wild effusions of the heart:
And if inspir'd, 'tis Nature's pow'rs inspire;
Her's all the melting thrill, and her's the kindling fire.

ANONYMOUS.

KILMARNOCK,
PRINTED BY JOHN WILSON.

M,DCC,LXXXVI.

The first edition consisted of slightly more than six hundred copies

194, one of the half-dozen most familiar quotations in English—perhaps the very best known "in the Scottish dialect":

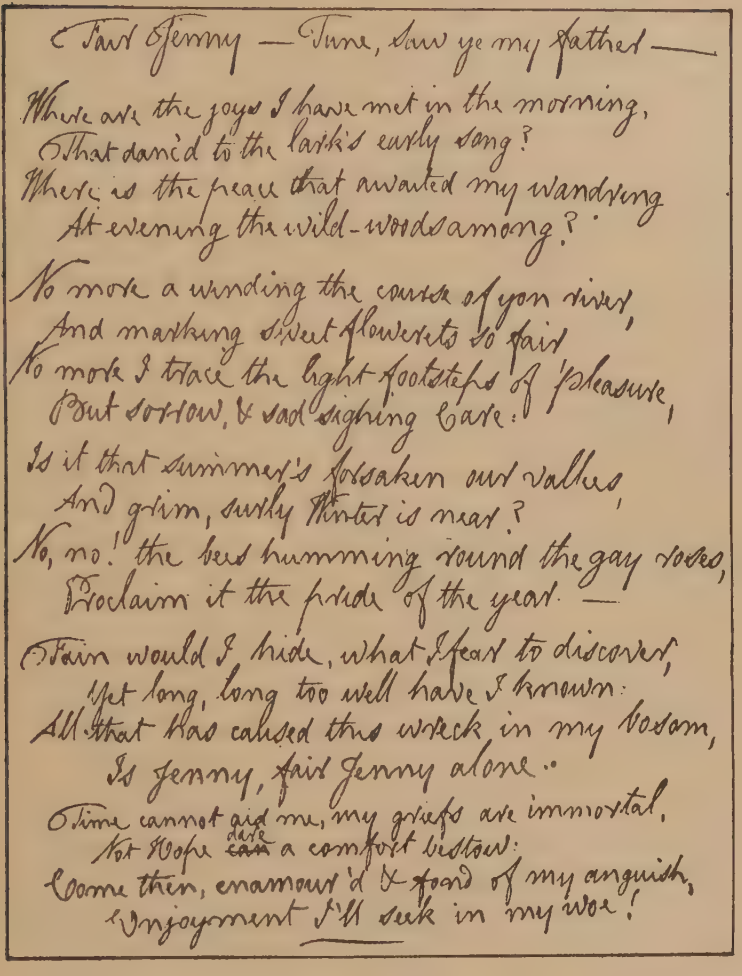
O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!

—"others," please note, not "ithers."

Some of the six-hundred-odd copies were issued in blue wrappers, and this, inevitably, is the scarcest and most desirable form in which the book survives. In fact, only four or five copies in this form are known, probably the finest of which was acquired by the trustees of the Burns Cottage at Alloway in 1908 for a thousand pounds. Only a degree less desirable are copies in the original blue boards, uncut. Trimmed and rebound copies are relatively common, with the term relatively strongly accented. Early in 1929 a worn copy sold for $6750—but accompanying it was a page of manuscript in the handwriting of Robert Burns.

As recently as 1897, however, a Kilmarnock Burns in the original wrappers, almost as fresh as on the day of issue, sold in London for the then sensational figure of £572, much to the dismay of a bookseller who a few years before had declined to pay £120 for it. It had originally been the precious heirloom of a widow who had disposed of it several years before by offering it to the highest bidder through the advertising columns of a provincial Scottish newspaper. An offer of eight pounds ten shillings had won it.

Consider, moreover, the story of one James Stillie of Leith, who in an earlier day bought a copy for a shilling —in the original wrappers and with a presentation inscription by the author on the title page. The wrappers were somewhat frayed and shabby, and Mr. Stillie unwisely decided to do something about it. He entrusted the book to a binder with the stipulation that the edges were not to be trimmed. The binder, however, knew best, and abandoned himself to a perfect debauch of trimming. To complete the tragedy, at some later period in its his-


Fair Jenny — Tune, saw ye my father —

Where are the joys I have met in the morning,
That danc'd to the lark's early song?
Where is the peace that awaited my wandering
At evening the wild-woods among?

No more a winding the course of yon river,
And marking sweet flowerets so fair
No more I trace the light footsteps of pleasure,
But sorrow, & sad sighing Care.

Is it that summer's forsaken our valleys,
And grim, surly Winter is near?
No, no! the bees humming round the gay roses,
Proclaim it the pride of the year. —

Fain would I hide, what I fear to discover,
Yet long, long too well have I known:
All that has caused this wreck in my bosom,
Is Jenny, fair Jenny alone.

Time cannot aid me, my griefs are immortal,
Not Hope can a comfort bestow:
Come then, enamour'd & fond of my anguish,
Enjoyment I'll seek in my woe!

FAIR JENNY

Burns's original draft of the song later published as Where are the joys I have met in the morning?

tory the Stillie copy turned up with the inscription in Burns's hand cut out. This superior act of vandalism, according to W. Craibe Angus's *Printed Works of Robert*

Burns (Glasgow, 1899), reduced the number of known presentation copies of the Kilmarnock Burns to one.

Here, too, is the story of another copy which is not without its tragic note. Few nineteenth-century Englishmen were more bookwise than John Payne Collier, the eminent Shakespearean commentator. In *An Old Man's Diary* (London, 1871–2) he quoted this incident under date of August 1, 1832, when the Kilmarnock Burns was less than a half century old:

> I met with a vexatious disappointment today. I was passing through Turnstile to Lincoln's Inn Fields, and so to Somerset House, when I cast my eyes upon some shelves with books outside a shop kept by a man of the historical name of Cornish. I saw one book that I much desired to possess, viz., the Kilmarnock edition of the poems of Burns. As I was going further, and intended to return directly, I put it back on the shelf, making up my mind to purchase it on my way home. The price was only 1/6, but I knew it would not be dear at a guinea; and when I returned by the same way I did not for a moment forget my book, for I already considered it mine. My mortification, therefore, was not a little, when, as I passed the place again, I found it gone—sold for 1/6 to somebody else! I resolved from that time never to run such a risk again. It was uncut, and in the original boards. I have never seen any such copy.

A parallel experience has befallen every frequenter of old bookstores, but John Payne Collier probably remains unique among men in having been too lazy to bear off a Kilmarnock Burns for half the original purchase price.

IV

Burns enjoyed the distinction of being reprinted in America within two years of the appearance of the Kil-

marnock edition of his poems—striking proof of his instantly-won popularity, particularly when it is recalled that the first American edition of Shakespeare (and the first produced outside the British Isles) was not published until seven years after the American Burns and nearly a century and three quarters after the First Folio. Competition for the honor of introducing him, indeed, appears to have been keen, for Philadelphia and New York produced his poems almost simultaneously under independent auspices.

The New York edition is the scarcer of the two; a copy sold for $85 in Philadelphia in 1927, as against $50 for a Philadelphia copy offered at the same sale. Burns never saw any more of America than he saw of Jamaica, but his songs had won America's heart before she had wholly taken to that still slightly palpitating organ the Constitution of the United States.

MARK TWAIN AND *THE INNOCENTS ABROAD*

I

LEE met Grant at Appomattox and a demobilized Union soldier who was fussy about his personal appearance devoted a sizeable share of his resources to getting an occasional shoe-shine in French's Hotel in New York. His dress, apart from his glistening shoes, was so shabby that the management finally requested him to take his custom elsewhere. A few years later he bought the hotel.

The shabby ex-soldier was young Joe Pulitzer, maker of the New York *World,* and he has nothing at all to do with this story beyond the fact that there were two million others like him. Yet not quite like him. Exact statistics are not available, but the proportion of the two million who subsequently acquired hotel properties, whether or no they tore them down and built newspaper offices in their stead, was certainly negligible. Many, probably most of the two million never recovered the economic ground lost by their service. Thousands of them —a far greater proportion than among Americans in the World War—bore the scars of wounds or disease, or of privations suffered in military prisons. Thev were glad to take anything that offered—if anything offered.

Doubtless a considerable fraction of them were attracted by the appeal of the American Publishing Company of Hartford, Connecticut, who were "engaged in the publication of rare and valuable works, selling them by subscription only." "The sale of our works," the company declared, "is an honorable and praiseworthy employment, and is particularly adapted to disabled Soldiers, aged and other Clergymen having leisure hours, Teachers and Students during vacation, &c., Invalids unable to endure hard physical labor, Young Men who wish to travel and gather knowledge and experience by contact with the world, and all who can bring industry, perseverance, and a determined will to work. *Women who can devote time to the work, often make the best of canvassers.*" The italics and the reprehensible comma were the American Publishing Company's.

The company had done rather handsomely in the subscription book line. Its mainstay among authors was Albert Deane Richardson, who as representative of Horace Greeley's New York *Tribune* had had far more than the average war correspondent's share of hair-breadth 'scapes and countless other thrills, and wrote graphically of them. By a tragic irony he met his fate in the home office of the *Tribune* at the hands of a freshly divorced husband whose former wife Richardson was engaged to marry. Richardson lingered six days after the shooting and the devoted woman married him on his death-bed. He was only thirty-three, but he had lived long enough to pass on some excellent advice to a writer whose connection with the American Publishing Company, and whose place in world literature, were to exceed vastly in importance those of the gallant Richardson.

II

Those disabled soldiers, aged clergymen and others equipped with the qualities sought by the American Publishing Company who responded to its appeal must have netted a tolerably neat income, for there was money enough in the North to spend for books. There was money enough for sundry luxuries—travel, for instance. On June 8, 1867, the steamer *Quaker City* was to sail on an excursion to the Holy Land. In a day of round-the-world cruises and floating universities such a trip as the *Quaker City's* would command only such newspaper space as to cause an instant's twinge of envy in the breast of anyone who couldn't go. Oddly enough, the projected *Quaker City* venture commanded little more press notice at the time. Yet it was to be an historic argosy. The pilgrimage was to be the first of its kind in maritime history—the first occasion on which a company of passengers would embark as a unit for a trans-ocean pleasure voyage with the expectation of returning in a like state of solidarity. Several notables were due to make the trip. The promoters of the enterprise made much of the fact that the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher and General William Tecumseh Sherman were going—they didn't go, but that may not have been the promoters' fault. There were some seventy-five names on the passenger list, from Allen, A. B., New York City, to Van Nostrand, John A., Greenville, N. J. A fifth of the way down appeared the name of Clemens, Samuel L., San Francisco.

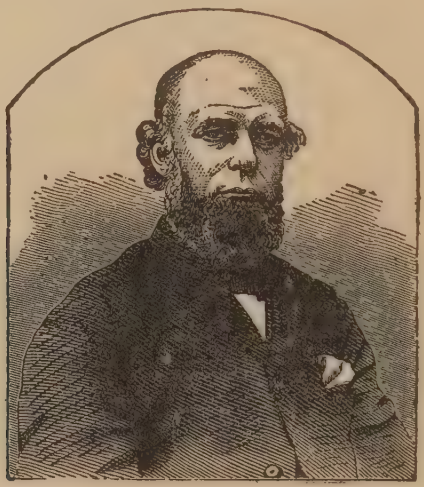
Clemens was a sort of war veteran himself. In 1861, in his home town of Hannibal, Missouri, he had joined a local military company and been elected second lieuten-

ant. The outfit was billeted in a barn loft one night when the hay caught fire. Lieutenant Clemens, awakened from a sound sleep, rolled out of a window, and the enthusiastic troops pitched a pile of burning hay on him. He had sprained his ankle badly on landing, but with this fresh indignity he took to his good heel and ran out of the war. He remained in bed at the adjacent farmhouse for several weeks recovering from the experience, and the Confederacy lost an item of indifferent junior officer material. Young Clemens went out to Nevada, then to San Francisco, doing more newspaper work than anything else. In 1866 he was sent to the Sandwich Islands—that is, Hawaii—to write a series of letters for the Sacramento *Union*. At the end of that year he sailed for New York, having arranged to do some letters for the *Daily Alta California* of San Francisco—he had in mind a vague project of touring the world. In New York he saw Charles Henry Webb, an old California friend, and a book resulted, a patchwork of letters for the Sacramento *Union*. It took its name from the first piece, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, and Other Sketches*. The collection was "by Mark Twain," a name born of early days on the Mississippi, which he had adopted in Nevada. The book appeared on May 1st—little more than a month before the scheduled departure of the *Quaker City*.

III

Sam Clemens was enthusiastic at the idea of the *Quaker City* party. In the early spring of 1867 he put the project up to the proprietors of the *Alta California*. After a protracted intra-office debate they told him to go ahead. They

would pay him twenty dollars a letter for fifty letters of some two thousand words each—just what the Sacramento *Union* had paid him for his Sandwich Islands copy. And on June 8th, as advertised, "the very beautiful and substantial side wheel steamship *Quaker City*," Captain Charles C. Duncan commmanding, steamed out of the port of New York with Sam Clemens on board.



CAPTAIN CHARLES C. DUNCAN

The skipper of the Quaker City

The voyage lasted five months and eleven days. On November 19, 1867, the *Quaker City* docked at New York, and a much-traveled Sam Clemens began to look about for further gainful employment. A few days later he became for a few troubled weeks secretary to Senator William M. Stewart, representing the fledgling State of Nevada. *The Jumping Frog* was selling moderately, but the royalty returns were not sufficient to maintain its author in the style to which he would like to be accustomed.

On December 1st a letter from the American Publishing Company reached him in Washington. Mr. Clemens had never responded to the appeal for "agents throughout the country"; he was not seeking "exclusive territory to operate in," nor did the letter intimate that he might own the qualities which made a good subscription book salesman. "We are desirous of obtaining from you," wrote the publishing company's Mr. Elisha Bliss, Jr., "a work of some kind, perhaps compiled from your letters of the past, etc., with such interesting additions as may be proper. . . . We are perhaps the oldest subscription house in the country, and have never failed to give a book an *immense* circulation." The letter then detailed the truly impressive figures of the firm's success with the books of Albert D. Richardson.

Mr. Clemens made haste to answer. He suggested a book composed of his *Quaker City* letters. "I could weed them of their chief faults of construction and inelegancies of expression, and make a volume that would be more acceptable in many respects than any I could now write. . . . If you think such a book would suit your purpose, please drop me a line, specifying the size and general style of the volume; when the matter ought to be ready; whether it should have pictures in it or not; and particularly what your terms with me would be, and what amount of money I might possibly make out of it. The latter clause has a degree of importance for me which is almost beyond my own comprehension. But you understand that, of course."

Early in the new year (1868) the high contracting parties got down to business. Clemens journeyed to Hartford, unaware, certainly, that that pleasant city would

come to be more nearly home to him than any other community in which his restless feet ever found lodgment. Mr. Bliss offered him an interesting alternative: ten thousand dollars cash for the copyright or a five percent royalty. Bliss favored the royalty plan; so did Richardson, with whom Clemens discussed it—Richardson's royalty, by the way, was only four percent. Clemens accepted the royalty gamble—evidencing, as he later declared, "the best business judgment I ever displayed." Copy was to be delivered by the middle of July.

And here a serious hitch developed. The publishers of the *Alta California*, it appeared, had "stealthily" copyrighted the *Quaker City* letters and were now considering bringing out a book on their own account to win back their thousand-dollar investment. Correspondence failed to straighten out the tangle. There was nothing for it but a trip to San Francisco and a heart-to-heart, face-to-face talk with the proprietors.

Were the minutes of this conference available they would make interesting reading. It resulted in a complete Clemens victory, but not an easy one. The *Alta* people offered him a ten percent royalty, but that wouldn't do—"the book sale would be confined to San Francisco and my royalty would not be enough to board me three months." Well, then, the *Alta* people would forego the book idea, but "in my preface (to the American Publishing Company edition) I must thank the *Alta* for waiving its 'rights' and granting me permission. I objected to the thanks. . . . After considerable debate my point was conceded and the thanks left out."

The incident rankled throughout Mark Twain's life.

Thirty-six years later he wrote in the notes that have been assembled as his *Autobiography:*

Noah Brooks was editor of the *Alta* at the time, a man of sterling character and equipped with a right heart, also a good historian where facts were not essential. In biographical sketches of me written many years afterward (1902), he was quite eloquent in praises of the generosity of the *Alta* people in giving to me without compensation a book which, as history had afterward shown, was worth a fortune. After all the fuss, I did not levy heavily upon the *Alta* letters. I found that they were newspaper matter, not book matter. They had been written here and there and yonder, as opportunity had given me a chance working moment or two during our feverish flight around about Europe or in the furnace heat of my stateroom on board the *Quaker City*, therefore they were loosely constructed and needed to have some of the wind and water squeezed out of them. I used several of them—ten or twelve, perhaps. I wrote the rest of "The Innocents Abroad" in sixty days, and I could have added a fortnight's labor with the pen and gotten along without the letters altogether. I was very young in those days, exceedingly young, marvelously young, younger than I am now, younger than I shall ever be again, by hundreds of years. I worked every night from eleven or twelve until broad day in the morning, and as I did 200,000 words in the sixty days the average was more than 3,000 words a day—nothing for Sir Walter Scott, nothing for Louis Stevenson, nothing for plenty of other people, but quite handsome for me.

Despite the *Alta* complication and the handicap of the transcontinental journey which that complication necessitated, the manuscript of the new book was ready very nearly on time. It seems to have reached Bliss's hands about the first of August. Not long thereafter it was turned over to Fay and Cox of New York, jobbers of illustra-

"THEY WERE SEASICK. AND I WAS GLAD OF IT"

This drawing from the first edition of The Innocents Abroad *contains the first published portrait of Mark Twain*

tions, and True Williams of their staff was entrusted with the task of executing the imposing total of nearly two hundred and fifty sketches.

Williams was not a great artist, but his work is so intimately associated with the books of Mark Twain over a period of twenty-five years (or nearly two-thirds of the latter's literary career) that there are still thousands of Mark Twain admirers who do not feel quite at home in re-reading him save in the ugly but comfortable formats

so abundantly adorned with the drawings which must have been turned out as if from a machine (and a speedily

THE

INNOCENTS ABROAD,

OR

THE NEW PILGRIMS' PROGRESS;

BEING SOME ACCOUNT OF THE STEAMSHIP QUAKER CITY'S PLEASURE EXCURSION TO EUROPE AND THE HOLY LAND; WITH DESCRIPTIONS OF COUNTRIES, NATIONS, INCIDENTS AND ADVENTURES, AS THEY APPEARED TO THE

AUTHOR.

WITH TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY

MARK TWAIN,

(SAMUEL L. CLEMENS.)

(SOLD BY SUBSCRIPTION ONLY, AND NOT FOR SALE IN THE BOOK STORES. RESIDENTS OF ANY STATE DESIRING A COPY SHOULD ADDRESS THE PUBLISHERS, AND AN AGENT WILL CALL UPON THEM.)

HARTFORD, CONN.:

AMERICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY.

BLISS & CO., NEWARK, N. J.; R. W. BLISS & CO., TOLEDO, OHIO.
S. C. GILMAN & CO., CHICAGO, ILL.; NETTLETON & CO., CINCINNATI, OHIO.
F. A. HUTCHINSON & CO., ST. LOUIS, MO.
H. H. BANCROFT AND COMPANY, SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.
1869.

The title page bristled with selling points for post-bellum book agents

revolving machine) by Williams and his associates, but in the main by Williams. The American Publishing Company later took Williams over from Fay and Cox, having

work enough of their own to keep him plentifully busy. Frank Bliss, son of Elisha Bliss, Jr., later told Merle Johnson that Williams was "a well-read and pleasant fellow, whose convivial habits frequently led him astray, but these were overcome in the latter years of his life, I am happy to say, causing Mr. Clemens to declare that he was the greatest combination of hog and angel he ever saw."

Not until the end of the following April did the book go to press on a print order of twenty thousand copies. It was called *The Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrim's Progress*. Originally the manuscript had been entitled simply *The New Pilgrim's Progress*, and the American Publishing Company had nearly been disrupted in the ensuing debate. "Sacrilege!" cried the opponents of the title, and the same sentiment was echoed in milder form a little later by Miss Olivia Langdon. Miss Langdon was a sister of Langdon, Charles J., Elmira, N. Y., of the *Quaker City* passenger list. Charles had been one of the most youthful members of the party—a mere boy in comparison with the senescent Sam Clemens, who was not quite thirty-two at the time. One day, visiting Clemens's cabin, Charles had showed him a miniature of his younger sister. Whenever Charles called on him after that Sam Clemens had asked to see the miniature. Home once more, he had visited Elmira and seen the original. Ten days before St. Valentine's Day of 1869 they became engaged. Having thus permitted Sam Clemens to select a new title for herself, Miss Langdon asserted the reciprocal right of approving or rejecting the title of the new book—and won it.

IV

When Senator Stewart, Sam Clemens's quondam employer, published his *Reminiscences* in 1908 he presented therein a remarkable version of the birth of *The Innocents Abroad*. The Senator, a native of New York State, had left Yale in the middle of his course in 1850 to go to California. Two years later he turned from mining to law, and became one of the early political powers of the Coast. In 1860 he came back East—as far as Virginia City, Nevada, of which thriving community Sam Clemens became a resident the following year.

The Senator is far from complimentary in his reminiscential allusions to his more notable fellow-townsman, though he concedes that the latter was "the most lovable scamp and nuisance who ever blighted Nevada." This description may be a concession to Mark Twain's subsequently achieved fame, for the lovability is not apparent in the other strokes in the Senator's portrait: "Sam Clemens was a busy person. He went around putting things in the paper about people, and stirring up trouble. He did not care whether the things he wrote were true or not, just so he could write something, and naturally he was not popular. I did not associate with him."

According to the Senator, he was sitting in his Washington living quarters one morning in the fall of 1867 when "a very disreputable-looking person slouched into the room. He was arrayed in a seedy suit, which hung upon his lean frame in bunches with no style worth mentioning. A sheaf of scraggy black hair leaked out of a battered old slouch hat, like stuffing from an ancient

Colonial sofa, and an evil-smelling cigar butt, very much frazzled, protruded from the corner of his mouth. He had a very sinister appearance."

The sinister-appearing person had just returned from a trip abroad. "I have a proposition," he told Stewart, according to Stewart. "There's millions in it. All I need is a little cash stake. I have been to the Holy Land with a party of innocent and estimable people who are fairly aching to be written up, and I think I could do the job neatly and with dispatch if I were not troubled with other —more—pressing—considerations. I've started the book already, and it is a wonder. I can vouch for it."

The Senator asked to have a look at the manuscript, and Mark handed him a batch. The Senator was impressed. Would Clemens care to accept a sinecure as his secretary, sleeping in an adjacent hall bedroom and writing in the Senator's room while the latter was absent on affairs of state? He would, and he did. But he burned the lights all night, and he smoked in bed, and the landlady, frightened out of her wits, protested to the Senator. (The smoking in bed charge was probably well founded. Mark Twain did it to the end of his life; even so sympathetic a commentator as William Dean Howells tells of tiptoe visits to Mark's quiet bedside and the removal from his limp fingers of potential fire menaces.) These goings-on, the Senator declared, must stop—otherwise steps would be taken.

"I'll get even with you," the Senator says Mark retorted, and continues: "He did. When he wrote 'Roughing It' he said I had cheated him out of some mining stock —or something like that . . . and he printed a picture of me in the book, with a patch over one eye." But Mark

stayed on at the Senator's establishment despite this give and take of threats, the reader gathers, for "he wrote the book in my room, and named it 'The Innocents Abroad.'"

The offending passage in *Roughing It* (1872) to which the Senator alludes in the foregoing quotation from his *Reminiscences* was this:

The likeness of Senator Stewart which appeared in Roughing It

Mr. Stewart (Senator, now, from Nevada) one day told me he would give me twenty feet of "Justis" stock if I would walk over to his office. It was worth five or ten dollars a foot. I asked him to make the offer good for next day, as I was just going to dinner. He said he would not be in town; so I risked it and took my dinner instead of the stock. Within the week the price went up to seventy dollars and afterward to a hundred and fifty, but nothing could make that man yield. I suppose he sold that stock of mine and placed the guilty proceeds in his own pocket. [My revenge will be found in the accompanying portrait.]

V

The first copies of *The Innocents Abroad* were ready at the end of July, 1869. Its success was immediate. The soldiers, clergymen, teachers, students, invalids, and others among whom exclusive territory had been parcelled out had disposed of 5,170 copies by the end of August, of thirty-one thousand by the end of the year. In nine months—that is, by May, 1870—the success of the book, according to Mark Twain himself (who certainly had his data from Bliss), had advanced the American Publishing Company's stock from twenty-five to two hundred and produced seventy thousand dollars profit. "It was a book of travel; its lowest price was three and a half dollars," records Albert Bigelow Paine, Mark Twain's thorough biographer. "No such record had been made by a book of that description; none has equaled it since. If Mark Twain was not already famous, he was unquestionably famous now. . . . He was swept into the domain of letters as one riding at the head of a cavalcade—doors and windows wide with welcome and jubilant with applause."

The very earliest copies of *The Innocents Abroad* to leave the press bore several evidences of having been the result of a rush order. The table of contents occupied eight pages, and on the side margins of the final two (xvii and xviii) the page numbers indicating the chapter positions were omitted. What happened is obvious. The table of contents was set before the complete manuscript was in type—that is, before the folios for the final chapters were known—and the folios were to be added later. In the rush of make-up somebody forgot and an agreeable bibliographical point was created. The word "Conclusion" (page

xviii), that should have been included with the summary of Chapter LX, was also left out. Page 129, concluding Chapter XIII, contained only seven lines of type, and to fill the resulting five inches of white space a picture of Napoleon III, "the genius of Energy, Persistence, Enterprise," as young Mr. Clemens characterized him two years before Sedan, was inserted in subsequent issues. This

NAPOLEON III AS A STOP-GAP

This portrait was added to page 129 of later issues of The Innocents Abroad *to fill white space*

brought the total of illustrations actually used to 235—one more than the title-page guaranteed. The heading "Chapter XLI" (page 643) was eventually corrected to "Chapter LXI," but the original faulty transposition survived beyond the earliest issues, and the wonder is that it was ever discovered at all. All of these blunders are essential to a first issue, but if the first mentioned, the omitted numerals on pages xvii and xviii, is discoverable,

the others are certain to be present. It is thanks to Merle Johnson, who has gone over many copies of every known Mark Twain first edition with an ultra-fine-tooth comb, that the details of these highly significant minutiæ are available to the collector.

Copies of *The Innocents Abroad* which perpetuate these essential shortcomings are scarce—in good or fine condition especially so. The combination of errors probably did not exist at the outset in more than a few hundred—possibly a few score—of copies. The book was read, reread and re-reread as only a popular book can be, and it was not a book to endure many readings. Its 651 pages of text plus five of publisher's advertisements measure nearly two inches in thickness, covers excluded—a ponderous bulk for any binding to support indefinitely without suffering a sprained hinge. In average good condition the book in its first state is worth around seventy-five or one hundred dollars.

VI

The Innocents Abroad was dedicated to Mark Twain's mother, and the form of the dedication led to an amusing incident the history of which Mark Twain narrated at a dinner given in December, 1879, by the publishers of the *Atlantic Monthly* in honor of the seventieth birthday of Oliver Wendell Holmes. "The first great man who ever wrote me a letter was our guest," Mark Twain declared. "He was also the first great literary man I ever stole anything from, and that is how I came to write to him and he to me." He continued:

When my first book was new a friend of mine said to me, "The dedication is very good." Yes, I said, I thought it was. My friend said: "I always admired it, even before I saw it in the 'Innocents Abroad.'" I naturally asked, "What do you mean? Where did you ever see it before?" "Well, I saw it first some years ago as Dr. Holmes's dedication to his 'Songs in Many Keys.'" Of course, my first impulse was to prepare this man's remains for burial, but upon reflection I said I would reprieve him for a moment or two, and give him a chance to prove his assertion if he could. He stepped into a bookstore, and he did prove it. I had really stolen that dedication, almost word for word. I could not imagine how this curious thing had happened; for I knew one thing, for a dead certainty,—that a certain amount of pride always goes along with a teaspoonful of brains, and that this pride protects a man from deliberately stealing other people's ideas.

It appeared, he explained, that on his trip to the Sandwich Islands in 1866 for the Sacramento *Union* he had been indisposed for a few days and had had a little time for reading. Among the available books was Dr. Holmes's *Songs in Many Keys*, which had appeared four years earlier. Unconsciously he had absorbed the dedication, and, subconsciously, out it had come in 1869 in all good faith as his own. And then appeared the kind friend.

Well, of course I wrote Dr. Holmes and told him I hadn't meant to steal, and he wrote back and said in the kindest way that it was all right and no harm done; and added that he believed we all unconsciously worked over ideas gathered in reading and hearing, imagining they were original with ourselves. He stated a truth, and did it in such a pleasant way, and salved over my sore spot so gently and so healingly, that I was rather glad I had committed the crime, for the sake of the letter. I afterward called on him and told him to make perfectly free with

any ideas of mine that struck him as being good protoplasm for poetry.

Dr. Holmes's dedication had read thus: "To the most indulgent of readers, the kindest of critics, my beloved mother, all that is least unworthy of her in this volume is

To
My Most Patient Reader
and
Most Charitable Critic,
My Aged Mother,
This Volume is Affectionately
Inscribed.

The "plagiarized" dedication

dedicated by her affectionate son." And thus Mark Twain's: "To my most patient reader and most charitable critic, my aged mother, this volume is affectionately inscribed."

It is interesting to note that in this *Atlantic* speech Mark Twain referred to *The Innocents Abroad* as "my first book." The author himself evidently had not been tremendously impressed with *The Celebrated Jumping Frog*, though the title piece itself has survived as one of the great American short stories. For his friend Webb, who had published it, he planned to write a play based on the *Quaker City* argosy, but abandoned it when he had completed one scene and written part of another. This chapter of Mark Twain's career was unknown until 1927,

when the fragment was brought to light and published in a small limited edition. It is not uproariously comic, and was obviously designed for reading rather than acting. He had written Webb about it from Washington on November 25, 1867, six days after the *Quaker City's* return, which makes it probable that the fragment was written on the trip, doubtless on the return journey. "I send the inclosed," he told Webb, "to show you that I had the *will* to do that thing—but I haven't the time. I am enrolled as an 'occasional' on the Tribune staff, have received a letter from the Herald offering me the same position in that paper (shall accept if it don't interfere with the Tribune arrangement) and must keep up a Pacific coast correspondence. If you were here to stir me up, we could do the play, sure. As it is, I don't think I will accomplish anything but my correspondence." And, as events turned out, he accomplished precious little of that. Instead he made a book.

VII

The first English edition of *The Innocents Abroad* was published in the spring of 1870 in two volumes, the first entitled *The Innocents Abroad* and the second *The New Pilgrim's Progress*. The publisher was John Camden Hotten, and he issued the books without authorization, a phenomenon by no means uncommon on either side of the Atlantic at that period. Hotten is one of the remarkable figures of nineteenth-century publishing. Born in 1832, he began his apprenticeship to the bookselling profession at the age of fourteen. Two years later he journeyed to America, remaining for eight years and acquiring, among

other things, a genuine appreciation of mid-century Yankee humor. It was Hotten who introduced to English audiences the work of Artemus Ward, Bret Harte and Charles Godfrey Leland and the broader strokes of

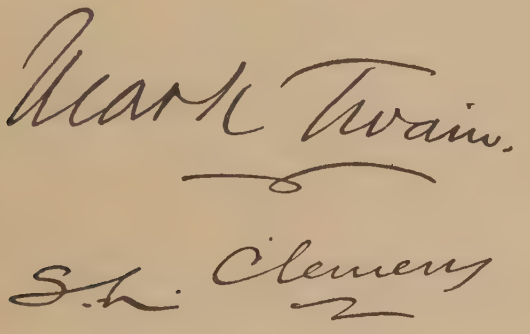
HORRORS OF A PARIS BARBER SHOP

One of True Williams's drawings for The Innocents Abroad

Lowell and Holmes. It was inevitable that Hotten should be the man to introduce Mark Twain.

Hotten was more than a trifle unscrupulous, but he was shrewd, intelligent, indefatigable. When his rival Moxon grew timid at the harsh reception accorded Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* in 1866 Hotten took over the book. Four years earlier he had run afoul of Tennyson and was haled into court as the result of a piracy of Ten-

nyson's early poems, but the affair was settled privately. When Hotten was not publishing books he was writing them; his biographies of Thackeray and Dickens (the first by "Theodore Taylor, Esq., Membre de la Société des Gens de Lettres," and the second by "The author of the 'Life of Thackeray' ") were speeded to the market immediately after the deaths of their subjects. He had a keen journalistic sense, and was quick to act on it. Thorn in the flesh though he was to an important group of American writers, his death at the age of forty-one removed an interesting and alert figure from the publishing scene.



Hotten later in the same year (1870) issued his *Innocents* in one volume under the title *Mark Twain's Pleasure Trip on the Continent.* Not until 1872 did the first authorized English (Routledge) edition appear, also in two volumes, with the same titles which Hotten had used two years earlier, and with a specially written preface. The preface described this as "a patient and conscientious revision," from which had been "weeded out . . . nearly, if not quite, all of the most palpable and inexcusable of its blemishes." The author added that he

had "wrought into almost every chapter additions which cannot fail to augment the attractions of the book, or diminish them." Merle Johnson believes that the revision may have been done "with a view to more complete copyright protection. I leave it to the more persistent collector," he adds, "to collate the volumes word for word."

VIII

On the February 2d following the appearance of *The Innocents Abroad* Olivia Langdon became Mrs. Samuel Langhorne Clemens in the full assurance that her husband could maintain her in the style to which she, at least, was accustomed. That very morning a check for four thousand dollars, the royalties on three months' sales, had reached Elmira from Hartford. It was none the less acceptable as a wedding present from the fact that it had been earned.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH AND *THE VICAR OF WAKEFIELD*

I

WHEN a cat and a dog whose respective kitten and puppy days are some distance in the past are thrust into a family circle, the attitude of the one to the other becomes a mere watchful and armed neutrality. Each is sufficiently domesticable to be willing to avoid, for the sake of the continuing approval of the head of the house, any suggestion of actual hostilities save for an exchange of growls on the occasion of unexpected meetings at corners. But how palpably thin is the veneer of civilized conformity! At less than skin depth smoulders the fire that would send each flying at the other's throat or eyes in a grand effort at annihilation.

Most metaphors taken from the animal kingdom and applied to the human are likely to do a severe injustice to one of the groups concerned; in the present instance the comparison may not be altogether fair to the memories of James Boswell, Esquire, of Auchinleck, and of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale Piozzi. The fact remains, however, that the relations between the Scotsman and the Englishwoman never came within several chilling degrees of cordiality, and that the reason for this condition was the jealousy engendered by the sincere veneration in which each held Dr. Samuel Johnson.

Boswell, for example, is discussing Oliver Goldsmith and the discovery of the manuscript of *The Vicar of Wakefield:*

Mrs. Piozzi and Sir John Hawkins have strangely mis-stated the history of Goldsmith's situation and Johnson's friendly interference, when this novel was sold. I shall give it authentically from Johnson's own exact narration:

"I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was drest, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return, and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

Thus Boswell, and thus Boswell's footnote to this same passage:

It may not be improper to annex here Mrs. Piozzi's account of this transaction, in her own words, as a specimen of the extreme inaccuracy with which all her anecdotes of Dr. Johnson are related, or rather discolored and distorted. "I have forgotten the year, but it could scarcely, I think, be later than 1765 or 1766, that he was *called abruptly from our house after dinner*, and returning *in about three hours*, said he had been with an enraged author, whose landlady pressed him for payment within doors, while the bailiffs beset him without; that he was *drinking himself*

drunk with Madeira, to drown care, and fretting over a novel, which, when *finished*, was to be his *whole fortune*, but *he could not get it done for distraction*, nor could he step out of doors to offer it for sale. Mr. Johnson, therefore, sent away the bottle, and went to the bookseller, recommending the performance, and *desiring some immediate relief*, which when he brought back to the writer, *he called the woman of the house directly to partake of punch, and pass their time in merriment.*"

This perfect Niagara of italics is entirely Boswell's, and one can imagine him digging in the underscorings in a greater ecstasy of malice with every stroke. Yet not utterly in malice.

Sir John Hawkins's "strange mis-statement," which seemed to merit not even footnote immortalization, read thus: "His [Goldsmith's] poems are replete with fine moral sentiments, and bespeak a great dignity of mind; yet he had no sense of the shame, nor dread of the evils, of poverty. In the latter he was at one time so involved, that for the clamours of a woman, to whom he was indebted for lodging, and for bailiffs that waited to arrest him, he was equally unable, till he had made himself drunk, to stay within doors, or to go abroad to hawk among the booksellers his *Vicar of Wakefield*. In this distress he sent for Johnson, who immediately went to one of them, and brought back money for his relief."

The disparities between Boswell and Hawkins do not seem particularly violent—did not seem so, one concludes, even to Boswell—and they may be passed over in favor of those existing between Boswell's account and that of the greater sinner. Mr. Boswell's underscorings of Mrs. Piozzi's account may profitably be considered in specific detail.

"*Called abruptly from our house after dinner.*" Both agree on the abruptness of the call; by Boswell's account it was made before breakfast, by Mrs. Piozzi's several hours later. The divergencies are trivial save for Mrs. Piozzi's "from our house." The attempt to centralize the Johnsonian universe in the home of the author of the *Anecdotes* is obvious, and Boswell seems fully justified in exposing it.

"Returning *in about three hours.*" The Boswellian underscoring is probably not so much concerned with the exact lapse of time as with Johnson's alleged return to the Piozzi (or Thrale, as it then was) home. As a matter of fact, Johnson did not meet the Thrales until two years after the incident of the *Vicar* manuscript. In all this, however, there may be nothing whereof to bring any graver charge against Mrs. Piozzi than a mere inaccuracy of memory. Boswell himself does not trouble to call attention to the patent discrepancy in dates.

"*Drinking himself drunk* with Madeira." This advertised inexactitude does not seem of overwhelming significance; the underscoring proves, if anything, only that Boswell knew more about the ways of Madeira than Mrs. Piozzi did. Johnson, apparently, did not tell Mrs. Thrale that the Madeira had been bought with his guinea. The Boswellian growl is distinctly audible here.

"A novel, which, *when finished.*" The exact status of the *Vicar* was probably of little moment, at the height of the crisis, to any of those concerned—Johnson, Goldsmith, least of all the landlady. A Boswellian quibble—but if Boswell had not been a great quibbler he would not have been a great biographer.

"Was to be his *whole fortune.*" A supreme quibble,

FIRST AID TO INDIGENT AUTHORS

Dr. Johnson reading the manuscript of The Vicar of Wakefield *in Goldsmith's room, while the latter's landlady watches the proceedings. Note the picture of the Good Samaritan on the wall. From the engraving by H. S. Sadd after the painting by Ward*

even for Boswell. At the moment, to Goldsmith, the manuscript probably represented four or five fortunes—and it must have looked like even more to the landlady when Dr. Johnson returned with cash in hand.

"*He could not get it done for distraction.*" Reasonable, if one accept the statement that the manuscript was not actually finished.

"*Desiring some immediate relief.*" There is nothing in Johnson's own account, as reproduced by Boswell, to show that Johnson did not make Goldsmith's plight plain to the bookseller.

"*He called the woman of the house directly to partake of punch, and pass their time in merriment.*" This statement calls forth the most elaborate Boswellian underscoring. But his own account does not controvert it, nor does Mrs. Piozzi's controvert Boswell's. Both things might have happened: Goldsmith may, doubtless did, rate the landlady in a high tone (a lot she cared, with the coins in her apron pocket), but it is surely not inconceivable that thereafter they partook of punch, and passed their time in merriment. Goldsmith, one may be sure, in all likelihood devoted some of the interval between glasses of punch to explaining what a great man he was, with perhaps a patronizing word or two in favor of Dr. Johnson. To the landlady Dr. Johnson (whom she had probably never seen before and may well never have seen again) remained in memory as one of the world's great. Anyone can run up a bill, but only an occasional genius can run it to earth.

It is unfortunate that Boswell did not live long enough to read the *Memoirs* of Richard Cumberland, which were not published until 1807, twelve years after Boswell's

death. For it remained for Cumberland (author, besides the *Memoirs*, of some fifty forgotten plays, and perhaps the least notable among the notables memorialized in Westminster Abbey) to perpetuate the most fantastic version of the *Vicar* story:

> I have heard Dr. Johnson relate with infinite humor the circumstance of his rescuing him [Goldsmith] from a ridiculous dilemma by the purchase-money of his *Vicar of Wakefield*, which he sold on his behalf to Dodsley, and, as I think, for the sum of ten pounds only. He had run up a debt with his landlady for board and lodging of some few pounds, and was at his wit's-end how to wipe off the score and keep a roof over his head, except by closing with a very staggering proposal on her part, and taking his creditor to wife, whose charms were very far from alluring, whilst her demands were extremely urgent. In this crisis of his fate he was found by Johnson in the act of meditating on the melancholy alternative before him. He showed Johnson his manuscript of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, but seemed to be without any plan, or even hope, of raising money upon the disposal of it; when Johnson cast his eye upon it, he discovered something that gave him hope, and immediately took it to Dodsley, who paid down the price above mentioned in ready money, and added an eventual condition upon its future sale. Johnson described the precautions he took in concealing the amount of the sum he had in hand, which he prudently administered to him by a guinea at a time. In the event he paid off the landlady's score, and redeemed the person of his friend from her embraces.

Richard Cumberland's memoirs have been many times reprinted—so have the adventures of Baron Munchausen. Cumberland is in general more reliable than Munchausen, but the catalogue of his merits ends at about that point, save that it is only fair to add that, like the Baron, he is almost invariably entertaining. Goldsmith enjoyed the

uncommon advantage of an early and painstaking biographer, James Prior, whose amply documented and still unsurpassed study appeared in 1837. Prior considers the four diverse accounts of the incident of the landlady, the impecunious lodger, the lumbering deux ex machina and the manuscript in detail, and his summary may be accepted as the final word in the matter:

> Nothing exhibits more the loose manner in which such anecdotes are received or told than these various versions of the same occurrence. The statement of Boswell is simple and probable, taken from the mouth of Johnson when deliberately questioned on the subject, and therefore as nearly as possible we may believe exact. Mrs. Piozzi errs from carelessness, and perhaps from the desire of bringing her dinner table before the notice of the reader, as it is obvious from reference to minute circumstances that the summons of Johnson to the prisoner must have occurred in the forenoon. Hawkins colors the matter in stating that he wished to get drunk, according to his peculiar ill humor, or the inaccuracy of his informant. . . . Cumberland's story seems wholly a fiction, or confounded with that of some other person, for none of the details agree with those of others or with fact, as we know that the sum received for the novel was sixty pounds, and that the purchaser was Newbery, not Dodsley; he knew nothing personally of Goldsmith for about eight or nine years afterwards; and the proposal of marriage seems doubly improbable from the hostess being said to be elderly, while to arrest the object of her passion seemed of all others the least dexterous mode of urging her suit.

II

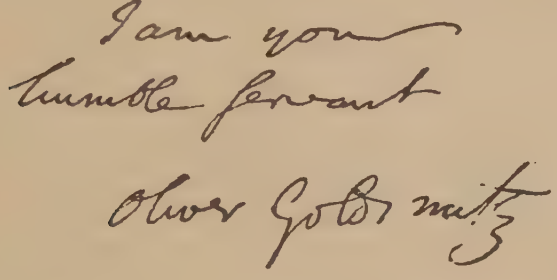
Yes, all kinds of contradictory things could have happened in the life of Oliver Goldsmith, and most of them did. Sifting the Boswell, Piozzi, Hawkins and Cumber-

land accounts of all their divergencies, sufficient in common remains to present a thoroughly graphic picture of the discovery of *The Vicar of Wakefield.* Hawkins and Boswell, incidentally, regardless of their opinions of each other as biographers of Dr. Johnson, were pretty nearly at one when it came to their opinion of Goldsmith. Hawkins, in fact, charged Goldsmith with one of the most damning shortcomings which one man may lay against another: "He never told a story but he spoiled it"—there are men today, as there were men then, who would prefer to be confronted with a set of true bills involving the entire decalogue. Johnson himself, with his deeper, more humane insight, made a more penetrating observation on the same order: "No man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had."

The Latin epitaph which Johnson composed for the Goldsmith memorial in Westminster Abbey is touching, magniloquent, even accurate save for the detail that it puts Goldsmith's birth three years and nineteen days later than it actually occurred. He was born, not on November 29, 1731, but on November 10, 1728—a distinction of surpassing significance to Mrs. Goldsmith, who brought eight children into the world in addition to Oliver. One of her sons became the famous parson who was "passing rich on forty pounds a year"—the best known salary in English literature—and an account of how he did it would be of more value to moiling humanity than conclusive proof that Shakespeare wrote Bacon's *Essays.*

In 1745 Oliver was admitted a sizer in Trinity College, Dublin—sizers, or servitors, were the humblest of the five grades into which aspirants for the higher education were then divided at Trinity. Sizers received board and

tuition free, and made over an insignificant sum for lodging, but they paid richly for all the advantages they received in the consciousness of their base status in the undergraduate hierarchy and in the performance of sundry menial duties which their status made obligatory. Goldsmith received his bachelor's degree, thought of being a lawyer, studied medicine for a year at the University of Leyden, made a pedestrian tour of the continent on virtually no funds, and at last, in 1756, became a Londoner



for the rest of his life. Five years were to elapse before he met Samuel Johnson—almost exactly two years before Boswell enjoyed the same eternally memorable experience. Bishop Percy of *Reliques* fame accompanied Johnson to a supper which Goldsmith was giving at his lodgings to "a large company, chiefly literary men." The bishop remarked on the unusual splendor of Johnson's attire—"he had on," according to the bishop, "a new suit of clothes, a new wig nicely powdered, and every thing so dissimilar from his usual habits, that I could not resist the impulse of inquiring the cause of such rigid regard in him to exterior appearance."

"Why, sir"—Johnson had certainly been waiting for the question—"I hear that Goldsmith, who is a very great

sloven, justifies his disregard of cleanliness and decency by quoting my practice, and I am desirous this night to show him a better example."

Whether the shock of this first meeting with Johnson was responsible or not, Goldsmith's later sartorial errors were on the side of foppery rather than of slovenliness. Each of the principles was doubtless in a pardonable state of déshabille at the instant of the famous intercession that put a classic into print and appeased a landlady—particularly if the incident occurred before breakfast.

III

If the entire story of *The Vicar of Wakefield* were available in degree at all comparable to this single effulgent detail, its history would be among the most familiar, or at least most fully if variously attested, in the whole range of English books. On the contrary, the sum of our knowledge comes to something like this: Oliver Goldsmith wrote *The Vicar*, and his claim to its authorship has never been disputed.

Consider, for a moment, the title page of the first edition: "The | Vicar | of | Wakefield: | A Tale. | Supposed to be written by Himself. | *Sperate miseri, cavete faelices.* | Vol. I. [II.] | Salisbury: | Printed by B. Collins, | For F. Newbery, in Pater-Noster-Row, London. | MDCCLXVI." There are many title pages that present mysteries which no bibliographical Sherlock Holmes has ever been able to solve, but none comparable to this. Who, for instance, was B. Collins? And why Salisbury? Salisbury, of course, exists, and existed in 1766. It has been a bishopric since 1220, and has always enjoyed,

according to Herr Baedeker, who would gladly emblazon any excitement that ever came to pass there, "a peaceful and comparatively uneventful history." It is familiar to every reader of Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy, and to every tourist to whom the English peregrination is a mere kaleidoscopic succession of cathedrals. Its fame as a publishing center, however, is utterly negligible, *The Vicar* excepted. How happens it that a single great classic, and almost no other book of more than trivial local importance, bears a Salisbury imprint?

The suspicion persists, and is tenable if unprovable, that the Salisbury imprint is a pure imposture. And the even more horrible suspicion persists, and, for lack of evidence to the contrary, is equally tenable, that B. Collins may have been—may still be—quite as visionary an entity as the notorious friend of Mrs. Sarah Gamp. "A fearful mystery surrounded this lady of the name of Harris," the reader will recall, "whom no one in the circle of Mrs. Gamp's acquaintance had ever seen; neither did any human being know her place of residence. . . . There were conflicting rumors on the subject; but the prevalent opinion was that she was a phantom of Mrs. Gamp's brain—as Messrs. Doe and Roe are fictions of the law."

B. Collins, too, may have been a fiction—a fiction of the publishing business. If he existed (and someone who stood for him existed if he did not) there is every reason to believe that he already owned, at the time of Mr. Goldsmith's distressing imbroglio with the landlady, a third interest in the perhaps uncompleted, and certainly undelivered, manuscript of *The Vicar of Wakefield*. And there is as much reason to believe that John Newbery (who had a son and likewise a nephew who shared the initial F, thus

further complicating the tangled story of *The Vicar*) owned still another third. Goldsmith, of course, despite his consistent inability to make both ends meet, was far from an unknown author at the time—was, indeed, a reasonably safe literary investment. There might well have been a host of bidders for the *Vicar* manuscript—a circumstance that must in no wise detract from the value of the sterling pre-prandial succor of Dr. Johnson.

If the Salisbury imprint and the Collins partnership are inventions there was a reason therefor that will in all likelihood never be known. It may in itself be of the sheerest unimportance; no one concerned in the enterprise could guess at the future fame of *The Vicar*. It is not conceivable, however, that the subterfuge involved the integrity of John Newbery, publisher of *The History of Goody Two-Shoes*, dedicated "to all young Gentlemen and Ladies who are Good, or intend to be Good," and so "inscribed by their old Friend, Mr. John Newbery, in St. Paul's Churchyard"—a production, it may be, of this identical Goldsmith.

The first London edition of the *Vicar* certainly appeared within a short interval after the publication of the original Salisbury edition. It was a child of spring, being issued on March 27, 1766. Three editions appeared that year, a fourth in 1770, a fifth in 1773, and a sixth in 1777. Not until 1779 was the book issued as the work of Oliver Goldsmith, M.D. *The Vicar of Wakefield*, it is plain, was far from a phenomenal best seller during its author's lifetime. Even had it been the sensation of the age, however, its success would hardly have altered his economic status. He died, like his fellow Irishman Oscar Wilde a century and a quarter later, beyond his means, but much further

beyond than poor Wilde. He owed, in fact, some ten thousand pounds, which was extremely handsome for those days. How much more impressive might the figure have been if *The Vicar* had only been a smashing success!

IV

The Vicar of Wakefield enjoyed the distinction of early translation. The first French edition was issued as early as 1767—as *Le Ministre de Wakefield.* Some subsequent French editions, it is interesting to note, have employed either "curé" or "vicaire" in the titles in place of "ministre." But the most famous French translation of all, from an American point of view, is of the "ministre" school. It was made in 1831 by a youthful member of the Bowdoin College faculty—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Two years earlier, however, a "traduction nouvelle" had appeared in New Orleans. The first American edition of the work in English had been issued by William Mentz of Philadelphia as far back as 1772.

For a century and a half *The Vicar of Wakefield* has been a favorite plaything of illustrators, some of whom, unfortunately, were far from competent to do it justice. The first illustrated edition was issued at London in 1780 in Joseph Wenman's *Entertaining Museum and Complete Circulating Library,* and the illustrations were limited to a single copperplate frontispiece in each of the two volumes. In 1792 appeared both the best-known and the best of early illustrated editions, with six plates by Thomas Stothard—their defects, declared H. T. Kirby in a discussion of the *Vicar's* illustrators in the *Bookman* (London, October, 1928), "are those of excessive sentiment

(a common Stothard failing) and their virtues consist of excellent grouping and arrangement." The times cried for sentiment, and so did the *Vicar;* Stothard was not only able to meet the need of the hour, but to meet it with competent craftsmanship. The most valuable illustrated *Vicar* is the edition of 1817 with twenty-four colored aquatints by Thomas Rowlandson. Mr. Kirby admits that here "the Vicar and his family appear in coarser grain than we have hitherto seen them," but adds that this edition may "represent the manners of the century more faithfully than the majority of illustrated editions." Of more recent illustrated editions, that of 1890 with drawings in black and white by Hugh Thomson enjoys a merited popularity.

The first two New York editions (1803 and 1807) were illustrated—an unusual circumstance for the time and place. The illustrator was Alexander Anderson, who, before 1800, while still in his twenties, had produced the first wood engravings ever made in the United States. Anderson, whose ears just missed the repercussion of "the shot heard round the world" from Concord Bridge (he was born in New York on April 21, 1775), had made engravings on copper when he was twelve years old—when he could obtain metal by no other means he would use rolled-out pennies, and in those days there were no railroad tracks on which pennies could be conveniently rolled out. In his maturity (which lasted for some time—he lived to be ninety-five) Anderson was for many years in the employ of the American Tract Society, and as that energetic organization distributed many hundreds of thousands of books and pamphlets adorned with Ander-

son's engravings, his illustrations were among the most widely looked-at of his long day.

V

Of all Goldsmith's multitudinous writings (and his poverty was continually driving him to the lowliest and bulkiest hackwork) only three or four copies of his own books bearing his inscription as donor seem to have survived. Perhaps he was too thoroughly alive to the truth that books must sell if authors are to live; certainly he was never in a position to acquire many copies of his own works for presentation even at a liberal discount from the publishers. Goldsmith autograph material in any form, in fact, is excessively rare, so rare that Dr. Katharine Canby Balderston's *Census of the Manuscripts of Oliver Goldsmith* (New York, 1926) extends only to seventy-two pages, though it enumerates, in addition to material of unquestionable authenticity (letters, documents, manuscripts and inscribed books) items of undetermined, undeterminable or highly dubious authenticity. In this latter division is listed a copy of the first edition of *The Vicar of Wakefield* with the inscription "from the authour" on the title page of the first volume. This, says Dr. Balderston, "may be an attempt to forge Goldsmith's hand, or a genuine inscription in good faith in the hand of the recipient. Since it bears a slight resemblance to Goldsmith's hand, the former seems more probable."

This very copy of the *Vicar* was included in the Jerome Kern library as dispersed at the Anderson Galleries in New York in January, 1929, and sold for $6600—about

four times the then current market rate for uninscribed *Vicars*. Prices rose to such unfamiliarly high proportions on that occasion, however, that the *Vicar* figure need not be marveled at—ordinarily good copies of the original Salisbury edition are heading for the ten thousand dollar class. If the Kern copy actually were an authentic presentation copy, then the price was cheap—and the Kern copy happens to have been bought by a bookseller who is a keen Goldsmith student and who is himself convinced that the inscription is authentic.

As a matter of fact, a rather good case can be made out in favor of the authenticity of the inscription. The inscription is written, not traced, and tracing is the obvious and at the same time the best means of fabricating a facsimile of anyone's handwriting—it is often legitimately resorted to by art editors in order to obtain perfect copy for printed reproduction. Moreover, anyone forging the inscription with intent to profit financially thereby might better have devoted his talents to more valuable names than Goldsmith's—Shakespeare's, patently, as William Henry Ireland did with such flagrant success. (This statement no longer holds true; Goldsmith's name is now eminently worth forging, and any fresh "discoveries" of Goldsmith inscriptions will be sure to receive scrupulous expert attention.) The inscribed *Vicar*, too, is dressed in a slightly more elaborate binding than ordinary copies of the first edition, and such touches of elegance were in that day common in authentic presentation copies. At all events, the Kern *Vicar* is now the property of another American collector into whose hands it passed from those of the dealer who bought it endowed with the full story of its possible defects and of its possibly unique heritage.

from the author

THE

VICAR

OF

WAKEFIELD:

A TALE.

Supposed to be written by HIMSELF.

Sperate miseri, cavete felices.

VOL. I.

SALISBURY:
Printed by B. COLLINS,
For F. NEWBERY, in Pater-Noster-Row, London,
MDCCLXVI.

A PRESENTATION VICAR?

Some experts question the authenticity of the inscription—there is something to be said on both sides. At all events no other signed copy is known, regardless of who signed this one

VI

The collector who specializes in *Vicars* charts for himself thereby a course almost as arduous as that which must be pursued by the collector of *Compleat Anglers.* Two fairly recent New York booksellers' catalogues devoted exclusively to eighteenth-century literature listed, respectively, thirty-four and forty-five different collectible editions of *The Vicar.*

Heading any list of *Vicars,* obviously, is the original Salisbury edition. It is only relatively scarce—not so rare, for instance, as the six volumes of Fielding's *Tom Jones.*

Bibliographically the first edition presents an absorbingly interesting study, but only from the most purely technical point of view. Its numerous points involve printer's minor delinquencies—minor in the sense that no one of them is of vast romantic interest to the layman. They were, one may hope, of vast if not romantic interest to the journeymen who committed them, because they are among the most inexcusable in the history of printing. In volume two the running head misspells "Wakefield" eleven different times in three different ways: "Waekcfield," "Wakfeield," and "Wakefild." The two later variations occur five times each, the first only once, whence it may have arisen that copies of the Salisbury edition are frequently heralded as "first issue, with the spelling 'Waekcfield' on page 95 of the second volume."

The business is not quite so elementary. Iolo A. Williams, in his description of Goldsmith's works (*Seven XVIIIth Century Bibliographies,* London, 1924), lists four variants of the first edition, and it is known that several copies exist in which are to be found characteristics

of several of these variants. The bibliography of *The Vicar* is so involved, in fact, that only the labor of years can ever hope to unravel it. Mr. E. Byrne Hackett of New York has long been engaged in preparing such a bibliography, and only when the results of his meticulous study are given to the world will the full details be known. It is certain, however, that the story will inevitably be as complicated as Goldsmith's finances.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE AND *THE SCARLET LETTER*

I

WITH the aid of such illumination as the coaches of the Eastern Railroad afforded, James T. Fields was devoting the short ride from Salem to Boston to the absorbed study of a batch of manuscript. The manuscript was quite literally manuscript—the typewriter had not yet been invented; moreover it was rolled, which was as unforgivable an offense then as now. One may imagine that, after the manner of rolled manuscript since paper was first invented, this particular manuscript would suddenly and disconcertingly curl up in Mr. Fields's face. It was a cold night at the end of 1849, and in all likelihood the railway coach was either a jolting icicle or a rattling furnace. It would be difficult to picture less auspicious surroundings in which an author could be put to the great test. For Mr. Fields was a publisher, and as his thumb moved up or down books were born or books died, and there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Mr. Fields also was by way of being an author himself. Earlier in this same year he had published a book of his own poems, among which were two lines that have survived, and will doubtless continue to survive, wholly divorced from their context and even from the sponsoring name of Mr. Fields:

"We are lost!" the captain shouted,
As he staggered down the stairs.

Mr. Fields subsequently declared himself to be "the worst sailor probably on this planet." His own recommendation is unnecessary; who but the least seamanlike of mortals would endow a ship with stairs?

Despite the watch-spring manuscript and the uncongenial if not physically hostile atmosphere of the railway coach, Mr. Fields sat enthralled. The manuscript was not a completed product, but Mr. Fields had no doubt that what was yet to come would be up to the standard set in the fragment in his hands. Before he went to bed that night he had written and mailed a note to the author "and told him that I would come again to Salem the next day and arrange for its publication."

This letter must have been heartening news to the late surveyor of customs of the port of Salem, though it was news which he had every right to expect. His name had already appeared on the title pages of a few books, and several books of his had appeared without his name —dullish bits of hackwork, and one essay in prose fiction which, in a moment of enthusiasm, he had had published at his own expense. Two books with his name on the title-page had enjoyed each a mild success of esteem, and among the principal esteemers was this same Mr. Fields, who had published neither of them, and who, on his momentous visit to Salem, had gone so far as to assure ex-Surveyor Nathaniel Hawthorne that he "would start with an edition of two thousand copies of anything you write."

"I remember that I pressed him to reveal to me what he had been writing," Mr. Fields declared more than

twenty years later in *Yesterdays With Authors*. "He shook his head and gave me to understand he had produced nothing. At that moment I caught sight of a bureau or set of drawers near where we were sitting; and immediately it occurred to me that hidden away somewhere in that article of furniture was a story or stories by the author of the 'Twice-Told Tales,' and I became so positive of it that I charged him vehemently with the fact. He seemed surprised, I thought, but shook his head again; and I rose to take my leave, begging him not to come into the cold entry, saying I would come back and see him again in a few days. I was hurrying down the stairs when he called after me from the chamber, asking me to stop a moment. Then quickly stepping into the entry with a roll of manuscript in his hands, he said: 'How in Heaven's name did you know this thing was there? As you have found me out, take what I have written, and tell me, after you get home and have time to read it, if it is good for anything. It is either very good or very bad, —I don't know which.' "

Mr. Hawthorne, as a matter of fact, was pretty well convinced that "this thing" was very good. He had, too, at the moment, the most practical of reasons for wishing the reading public to reciprocate his view. Three years earlier the influence of friends in President Polk's administration had gained him the Salem post and twelve hundred dollars a year. On Washington's Birthday of 1847 General Zacharay Taylor had won the Battle of Buena Vista against Santa Anna, and he rode into the White House on the current of his success in March of 1849. There was important patronage to be dispensed;

the far-reaching Whig scythe did not get around to mowing down Surveyor Hawthorne until June, making him the final notable casualty of the War with Mexico, and leaving him with a wife, two small children, and a house for which he was paying two hundred dollars a year rent. The family's assets consisted of one hundred and fifty dollars which Mrs. Hawthorne had put by in the prosperous years of the surveyorship. It would, therefore, be extremely gratifying if the new book could enjoy something more than a success of esteem.

II

No Colonial magistrate administered what he was pleased to regard as justice with more forthright zeal and rigor than Colonel John Hathorne of Salem. It was Colonel John's good or ill fortune to preside at the famous witchcraft trials of 1692, as a result of which some score of persons of the neighborhood were summarily speeded into an eternity which, whatever it held in store, could hardly match for malignant and hysterical severity the treatment accorded them in their final horrible hours among their fellowmen. Contrary to the commonly held version of the episode, some of the Salem witches were men; equally contrary, they were hanged and not burned. Despite this last slightly mitigating circumstance, it is not surprising to learn that a curse was put upon Justice Hathorne by the distressed next of kin of some accused wretch—the wonder is that tradition limits the number to one. But in that medieval New England night one curse was as good as a thousand, and the story of the anathema

survived as a lusty legend, and was invoked to explain any misfortune that came to blight a bearer of the name of Hathorne in succeeding generations.

The curse apparently never rose to vex the days of John's son Joseph, who was a farmer and seems to have died in bed, nor did it exercise an appreciable influence on the career of Joseph's son Daniel, who took to the sea, survived several lively brushes with the British as commander of a privateer, and died, certainly in bed, at eighty-five. Daniel had three sons, of whom one, Nathaniel, became captain of a trading vessel. The curse awoke and followed him to Surinam (Dutch Guiana, on the northern coast of South America), where he died of a fever at the age of thirty-two. It must have taken months for the news to get back to Salem and to the mother of his three children—a second Nathaniel, then four years old, and two daughters, one younger and one older than his namesake.

The captain's widow—she was twenty-seven—lived from that time forth a life of sorrowing and almost complete isolation, even taking her meals by herself. Despite the sombre atmosphere thus engendered about him young Nathaniel seems to have passed a reasonably normal boyhood—there are indications that he had several old-fashioned scraps with a luckless youngster named John Knight (affairs which Nathaniel justified on the ground that John was "a boy of very quarrelsome disposition"), and once he was severely injured in the leg in a ball game—some local adaptation, probably, of the primitive pastime of rounders or town ball out of which the exact science of latter-day baseball was born.

The higher education came more cheaply in the 1820's

than it is ever likely to do again, but for all that it is doubtful if Hawthorne could have gone to Bowdoin if his mother's family had not been amply capable of caring for the captain's widow and her three children. So to Bowdoin he went, in the summer of 1821, making the journey by coach, to which entered at a later stopping point Franklin Pierce, thirty-two years removed from one of the least colorful Presidencies of the United States, but always true gentleman and loyal friend. Pierce was going back as a sophomore, and doubtless gave the newcomer, out of the fulness of his own knowledge, an amplitude of detail about life at Brunswick. Greatness unrecognized walked the pleasant ways of Brunswick in those days. There was Pierce, there was Hawthorne, and in Hawthorne's own class there was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow; among Pierce's classmates was Calvin E. Stowe (he wrote it Stow then, just as Hawthorne was writing Hathorne), who was to secure the immortality of his surname by bestowing it on Harriet Elizabeth Beecher. And there was Jonathan Cilley, destined eighteen years later to win a melancholy distinction as the only Congressman ever killed in a duel with another.

How many youths of seventeen know "what they are going to do" when they enter college? Fewer in proportion now than in 1821, certainly, for in that elder day only a few clearly defined paths radiated from the academic shade to the world of post-graduate activities. One led to the ministry, one to the law, one to medicine, and one back to college. Hawthorne, in the weeks before his departure from Salem, had not even been sure that he wanted to go to college at all. But he had an inkling of an idea of what he would like to do, as a letter to his

mother, then at her brother's home in Maine, testifies—it is dated March 13, 1821:

> I don't read so much now as I did, because I am more taken up in studying. I am quite reconciled to going to college, since I am to spend the vacations with you. Yet four years of the best part of my life is a great deal to throw away. I have not yet concluded what profession I shall have. The being a minister is of course out of the question. I should not think that even you could desire me to choose so dull a way of life. Oh, no, mother, I was not born to vegetate forever in one place, and to live and die as calm and tranquil as—a puddle of water. As to lawyers, there are so many of them already that one half of them (upon a moderate calculation) are in a state of actual starvation. A physician, then, seems to be "Hobson's choice"; but yet I should not like to live by the diseases and infirmities of my fellow-creatures. And it would weigh very heavily on my conscience, in the course of my practice, if I should chance to send any unlucky patient "ad inferum," which being interpreted is, "to the realms below." Oh that I was rich enough to live without a profession! What do you think of my becoming an author, and relying for support upon my pen? Indeed, I think the illegibility of my writing is very author like. How proud you would feel to see my works praised by the reviewers, as equal to the proudest productions of the scribbling sons of John Bull! But authors are always poor devils, and therefore Satan may take them. . . .

"Do not show this letter," he wrote below his signature, and such is human nature that this privileged communication has become one of the best known intimate documents in the history of American literature.

Others at least who were at Bowdoin with Hawthorne knew what they wanted to do by the time they graduated. Cilley went into John Ruggles's law office at Thomaston, Pierce into Levi Woodbury's at Portsmouth. Stowe remained at Brunswick as librarian and instructor during

Hawthorne's senior year, and then went to Andover Theological Seminary. Longfellow went to Europe to spend a preparatory year before filling the new chair in modern languages offered him by his alma mater. And Hawthorne went back to Salem, to spend ten years almost in a single room—years of tense emotional isolation, which he later pictured in well-remembered words:

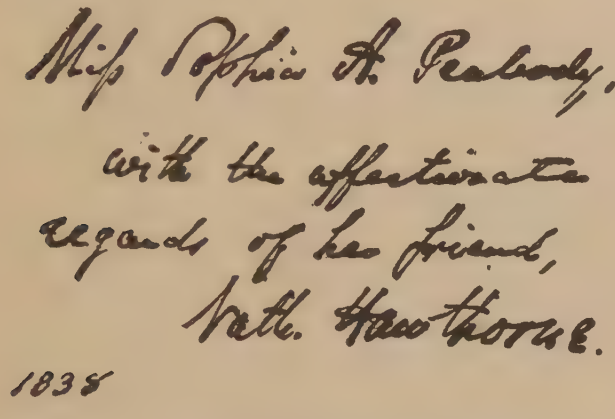
> Here I sit in my old accustomed chamber, where I used to sit in days gone by. . . . Here I have written many tales,—many that have been burned to ashes, many that doubtless deserved the same fate. This claims to be called a haunted chamber, for thousands upon thousands of visions have appeared to me in it; and some few of them have become visible to the world. If ever I should have a biographer, he ought to make great mention of this chamber in my memoirs, because so much of my lonely youth was wasted here, and here my mind and character were formed; and here I have been glad and hopeful, and here I have been despondent. And here I sat a long, long time, waiting patiently for the world to know me, and sometimes wondering why it did not know me sooner, or whether it would ever know me at all—at least, till I were in my grave. And sometimes it seemed as if I were already in the grave, with only life enough to be chilled and benumbed. But oftener I was happy,—at least, as happy as I then knew how to be, or was aware of the possibility of being.

An abundance of biographers appeared in due course, and one of them, Professor George E. Woodberry, paid Hawthorne the requested tribute of "great mention of this chamber" by entitling one of his chapters "The Chamber Under the Eaves." His earliest biographer—his son-in-law George Parsons Lathrop—records that during this period "he had little communication even with the members of his family. Frequently his meals were brought and left at his locked door, and it was not often that the

four inmates of the old Herbert Street mansion met in family circle. . . . The statement that for several years 'he never saw the sun' is entirely an error; but it is true that he seldom chose to walk in the town except at night, and it is said that he was extremely fond of going to fires if they occurred after dark." This last peculiarity is not the inevitable hall-mark of genius; it would have been more worthy of note if Hawthorne had enjoyed not going to fires.

The first ambitious fruit of the solitary hours in the "haunted chamber" was borne in 1828 when *Fanshawe, a Tale* appeared—anonymously and at Hawthorne's expense. This circumstance alone would make *Fanshawe* a scarce book today (for Hawthorne could not afford to get many copies printed), but the author's own efforts to suppress the product were afterward so assiduous that probably only around twenty copies—perhaps not so many—have survived Hawthorne's and Time's devouring hands. He contributed to *The Token*, the famous annual inaugurated by S. G. Goodrich (Peter Parley), and with his older sister Elizabeth wrote *Peter Parley's Universal History, On the Basis of Geography*—not the least successful of the one hundred and seventy Peter Parley books, of which, their indefatigable editor declared in 1856, some seven million copies had by then been sold. Hawthorne's name had yet to grace the title-page of a book—the moment arrived in 1837 with the publication of *Twice-Told Tales*, comprising eighteen stories, eight of them extracted from various *Tokens*. In the *Token* for the following year Hawthorne published a story, *Endicott and the Red Cross*, in which one of the characters was "a

young woman, with no mean share of beauty, whose doom it was to wear the letter A on the breast of her gown, in the eyes of all the world and her own children. Sporting with her infamy, the lost and desperate creature had embroidered the fatal token in scarlet cloth, with golden thread and the nicest art of needlework."



Hawthorne's engagement gift to Sophia Peabody was a copy of his Twice-Told Tales *with the above inscription*

In one copy of *Twice-Told Tales,* bound in brown morocco by his special command, Hawthorne wrote: "Miss Sophia A. Peabody, with the affectionate regards of her friend, Nath. Hawthorne. 1838." They were married in 1842 after a three or four years' engagement, and went to live in the house in Concord whence issued, four years later, *Mosses from an Old Manse.* In the year of the book's appearance the Hawthornes returned to Salem, where another four years had almost passed before Mr. Fields made his momentous visit.

III

True to his promise, on the day following the dispatch of his note of acceptance Mr. Fields journeyed up to Salem bubbling over "in such an amazing state of excitement" that the ex-surveyor, rendered cynical perhaps by the ingratitude of republics, "would not believe I was really in earnest." However much Hawthorne may have discounted this quite genuine enthusiasm, he was at least convinced that Fields was serious in his intention to publish the book. In the days that followed they got down to cases. Hawthorne's idea was that the new book should be a collection of short stories, after the manner of *Twice-Told Tales* and *Mosses from an Old Manse*—he wanted to call it *Old-Time Legends Together With Sketches, Experimental and Ideal.* The manuscript he had given Fields would take about two hundred pages of the new work, he thought. This manuscript was called *The Scarlet Letter,* and Hawthorne thought the story "too sombre" to make a book by itself. Fields thought quite otherwise, and finally won his point. A little before this decision was taken Hawthorne had written Fields thus:

> Keeping so close to its point as the tale does, and diversified no otherwise than by turning different sides of the same dark idea to the reader's eye, it will weary very many people and disgust some. Is it safe, then, to stake the fate of the book entirely on this one chance? A hunter loads his gun with a bullet and several buckshot; and, following his sagacious example, it was my purpose to conjoin the one long story with half a dozen shorter ones, so that, failing to kill the public outright with my biggest and heaviest lump of lead, I might have other chances with the smaller bits, individually and in the aggregate. However,

I am willing to leave these considerations to your judgment, and should not be sorry to have you decide for the separate publication.

In this latter event it appears to me that the only proper title for the book would be "The Scarlet Letter," for "The Custom-House" is merely introductory,—an entrance-hall to the magnificent edifice which I throw open to my guests. It would be funny if, seeing the further passages so dark and dismal, they should all choose to stop there! If "The Scarlet Letter" is to be the title, would it not be well to print it on the title-page in red ink? I am not quite sure about the good taste of so doing, but it would certainly be piquant and appropriate, and, I think, attractive to the great gull whom we are endeavoring to circumvent.

The manuscript of *The Scarlet Letter* was completed on February 3, 1850. On the following day Hawthorne wrote to his Bowdoin classmate and lifelong friend Horatio Bridge, then a naval officer stationed at the Portsmouth Navy Yard:

I finished my book only yesterday, one end being in press in Boston, while the other was in my head here in Salem; so that, as you see, the story is at least fourteen miles long. . . .

My book, the publisher tells me, will not be out before April. He speaks of it in tremendous terms of approbation. So does Mrs. Hawthorne, to whom I read the conclusion last night. It broke her heart, and sent her to bed with a grievous headache, which I look upon as a triumphant success.

Judging from its effect on her and the publisher, I may calculate on what bowlers call a ten-strike. Yet I do not make any such calculation. Some portions of the book are powerfully written; but my writings do not, nor ever will, appeal to the broadest class of sympathies, and therefore will not obtain a very wide popularity. Some like them very much, others care nothing for them, and see nothing in them. There is an introduction to this book giving a sketch of my custom-house life, with an imagina-

tive touch here and there, which may, perhaps, be more widely attractive than the main narrative. The latter lacks sunshine, etc. To tell you the truth, it is—(I hope Mrs. Bridge is not present)—it is positively a h—l-f—d story, into which I found it almost impossible to throw any cheerful light.

Bridge published this letter in his *Personal Recollections of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (New York, 1893), and no man can say whether it was Bridge or Hawthorne who inserted the dashes in "h—l-f—d," which presumably stands for "hell-fired."

The Scarlet Letter was published about the middle of March—probably on the 16th, less than six weeks after the completion of the manuscript. According to George Parsons Lathrop (*A Study of Hawthorne*, Boston, 1876), "the first edition of five thousand copies was exhausted in ten days." Mr. Fields had expressed his determination to "start with an edition of two thousand copies of anything you write," and it is conceivable that his enthusiasm attained such a pitch that he was willing to increase this figure. It seems hardly likely, however, that his business judgment (or lack of it) would permit him to go as high as five thousand copies for the first edition of a book by a comparatively unknown author. An important mechanical factor can be adduced as pretty convincing evidence that the edition was not nearly so large as that: the book was printed from type. The size of the first edition was probably much closer to the original Fields pledge of two thousand than to the Lathrop figure.

The second edition contains a preface dated March 30, 1850, and while datelines on prefaces, like too many datelines in newspapers and magazines, are not always of surpassing significance, there is no valid reason for doubt-

ing the accuracy of the designation in this case. If the preface was actually written on March 30th, then Mr. Fields was clearly going ahead with a second edition within two

THE

SCARLET LETTER,

A ROMANCE.

BY

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

BOSTON:

TICKNOR, REED, AND FIELDS.

M DCCC L.

The words Scarlet Letter *on the title page of the first edition (and on those of the second and third as well) were printed in red ink*

weeks of the original appearance of *The Scarlet Letter.* For the third edition the type was reset and stereotype plates made. *The Scarlet Letter,* its publishers were evidently agreed, was a success. And never since 1850 has it

ceased to be a success. It was never a sensational best seller in the manner of *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* but it has always been the sort of seller that makes publishers wish that copyrights held into eternity.

Ample evidence of the early popularity of the book is provided in the three distinct English editions (Bohn's Cheap Series, Routledge's Railway Library, and Walker's) which appeared in the year following the publication of the original American edition. In 1852 *The Scarlet Letter* became Volume 226 in Herr Tauchnitz's famous library, which had been inaugurated eleven years earlier—it is interesting to note that in the long interval since 1852 only two more Hawthorne titles have been added to that all encompassing collection. In the same year as the first English editions, however, *The Scarlet Letter* had been published in Leipsig in a German translation (*Der Scharlachbuchstabe*), and a French translation (*La Lettre Rouge*) appeared in Paris in 1853. The story has thrice been dramatized and has been made into an opera, with music by Walter Damrosch, and the film version with Lillian Gish as a lively Hester Prynne was one of the last feature pictures to precede the coming of the talkies.

IV

The first edition of *The Scarlet Letter* is invariably described as "first edition, first issue, with the word 'reduplicate' on page twenty-one, line twenty." This is merely cataloguers' enthusiasm; the first edition of *The Scarlet Letter* may be divisible into issues, but if so the marks of division have not yet been announced. The first edition contains no preface, the second has a "Preface to the

Second Edition"—"reduplicate" is common to all copies of the first edition. The alleged point has, however, been so widely proclaimed that it will be listed to the end of time, and it has at any rate amassed such a quantity of false bibliographical prestige (but not through the fault of any accredited Hawthorne bibliographer) that the circumstances are worth setting forth.

In the preliminary paper on "The Custom-House" is a long description of "the father of the Custom-House. . . . a certain permanent Inspector," who is not named in the book, but who was actually named Zach Burchmore. Mr. Burchmore was an artist in the matter of what no good New Englander of his or later times would feel called upon to apologize for calling vittles. "It was marvellous," declared Hawthorne in his introduction, "to observe how the ghosts of bygone meals were continually rising up before him; not in anger or retribution, but as if grateful for his former appreciation, and seeking to reduplicate an endless series of enjoyment, at once shadowy and sensual." In the second edition (*not issue*) "reduplicate" yields to "repudiate," and in the third edition "repudiate" makes way for "resuscitate."

Either "reduplicate" or "resuscitate" makes sense; "repudiate" makes no sense at all. Stylistically, "resuscitate" perhaps is preferable to "reduplicate." In all likelihood Hawthorne altered "reduplicate" to "resuscitate" after the printing of the first edition and the printer misread the alteration for "repudiate," which got into the second edition and made further alteration impossible until the printing of a third edition. In his own copy of the second edition Hawthorne placed an asterisk beside this passage, with this autograph footnote about Burchmore at the bot-

tom of the page: "I myself have often been the recipient of his tit-bits & my childen also. This is my gratitude for it." All honor to the memory of Zach Burchmore, who enjoyed the good things of this life, and enjoyed sharing them with others!

The Scarlet Letter was bound in the brown cloth without which any book bearing the imprint of Ticknor, Reed and Fields (and later of Ticknor and Fields) seems so strangely alien to the Boston of the 1850's. Tipped in opposite the inside front cover were four pages of advertisements dated March 1, 1850, listing titles by as rich an assembly of notables as ever graced a publisher's list: Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Whittier, Browning, Tennyson, Leigh Hunt, De Quincey. The words "Scarlet Letter" were printed "on the title-page in red ink," as Hawthorne had suggested—Mr. Fields obviously did not doubt the good taste of this bit of embellishment. The red letters were retained in the second and third editions.

Several misprints in the first and second editions were corrected in resetting the type for the stereotype edition, and at least one new misprint was made. The word "mortal" on page 100, line two, first edition, becomes "moral" in the reset edition (page 96, line two), but the context proves clearly that "mortal" was what Hawthorne intended.

The Scarlet Letter has done uncommonly well for a book that inaugurated its commercial career for seventy-five cents a copy. It has become, particularly in recent years, one of the great collecting desiderata of American literature. At the sale of the Wakeman collection of American authors in the spring of 1924 a copy of the first edition which Hawthorne presented to his sister Eliza-

beth sold for $350. In December, 1928, another copy of the first edition inscribed by Hawthorne to his sister-in-law brought $1250. At that time ordinarily good copies of the book without inscriptions were being quoted at from two hundred to three hundred dollars in booksellers' catalogues. The upward trend has become so pronounced, however, that succeeding seasons are certain to record advances in value, particularly for fine copies. But *The Scarlet Letter* will never attain the pinnacle of *Fanshawe*, for which Hawthorne all unwittingly himself created the market.

SAMUEL JOHNSON AND HIS *DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE*

I

THE messenger, almost certainly, was either Stewart, Maitland, Peyton, or one of the two Macbeans—poor Shiels had died a year earlier. The messenger came up the stairs of the house in Gough Square, almost equally certainly, with whatever elasticity of step remains in a man after seven years of single-purposed drudgery. He had just taken to Andrew Millar, publisher, the last batch of copy for *A Dictionary of the English Language*, by Samuel Johnson, A.M.—not yet, by ten years, LL.D.—and was returning with the blissful knowledge that he would nevermore set eyes on any of those accursed slips of paper on which, with admirable method, each of the thousands of definitions had been transcribed.

"Well," asked his employer, "what did he say?"

"Sir," replied the messenger, "he said, 'Thank God I have done with him.'"

It is plain that Mr. Millar had put no rancor in his voice; there was certainly none in Johnson's now.

"I am glad," he said, "that he thanks God for anything."

The occasion was certainly one to merit the most heartfelt thanksgiving both on the part of Mr. Millar and,

with even greater gusto, on that of Messrs. Johnson, Stewart, Maitland, Peyton, and the two Macbeans. They had "begun beating the track of the alphabet with sluggish resolution" in 1747, and it was now toward the end of 1754. Their employer had embarked on the vast undertaking in the sanguine expectation of completing it in three years. At that rate, even allowing for the pay of Messrs. Shiels, Stewart and the rest, some profit might have remained out of the £1,575 specified for the job. Mr. Millar and associates (among them William Strahan, who was also virtually Johnson's legal adviser) had, rather handsomely, paid the final instalment before the last of the manuscript was delivered—the ultimate casting of accounts, unfortunately, would show that they had been handsomer than they intended and through a bookkeeping error had advanced one hundred pounds too much.

II

The perfect Londoner, Johnson had spent little more than a fourth of his life there when, at the age of thirty-seven, he published his *Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language; Addressed to the Right Honourable Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield; One of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State.* The Earl presented the language with an adjective that was not born early enough to win a place in the great *Dictionary* and his son with a famous set of rules on how to play the game of gentleman. At some time, too, he is credited with having presented Samuel Johnson with ten pounds—if he did so, and if he collected autographs, he was richly repaid for this contribution to the cause of learning.

There was not, in 1747, when the *Plan* appeared, an abundance of English dictionaries. Manuals giving the Latin, Greek or French equivalents of English words had been in existence for more than two hundred years—John Minshewe's *Guide Into the Tongues*, issued in 1617, had embraced no fewer than eleven languages. In 1656 had appeared Thomas Blount's *Glossographia*, which was "a dictionary interpreting such hard words, whether Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, &c. that are now used in our refined English tongue." The following year was published *The New World of Words*, edited by Milton's nephew, Edward Philips, which Johnson's pre-Boswellian biographer, Sir John Hawkins, calls "the basis of English lexicography." The standard lexicon of Johnson's day, however, was the *Dictionarium Britannicum* of Nathan Bailey, a Stepney schoolmaster, first issued in 1721, of which several editions had appeared. Johnson, in fact, used an interleaved copy of the latest edition of Bailey as the basis for his own work. He made this copy, Sir John Hawkins relates, "the repository of the several articles, and these he collected by incessant reading of the best authors in our language, in the practice whereof, his method was to score with a black-lead pencil the words by him selected, and give them over to his assistants to insert in their places. The books he used for this purpose were what he had in his own collection, a copious but a miserably ragged one, and all such as he could borrow; which latter, if ever they came back to those that lent them, were so defaced as to be scarce worth owning, and yet, some of his friends were glad to receive and entertain them as curiosities." Dear, dear, what odd friends! And what an odd Sir John!

Boswell gives further details of the system: "The words, partly taken from dictionaries, and partly supplied by himself, having been first written down with spaces left between them, he delivered in writing their etymologies, definitions, and various significations. The authorities were copied from the books themselves, in which he had marked the passages with a black-lead pencil, the traces

Johnson's birthplace at Lichfield

of which could easily be effaced. I have seen several of them, in which that trouble had not been taken; so that they were just as when used by the copyists." Unfortunately Johnson and Boswell did not meet until eight years after the appearance of the *Dictionary*, so that the meticulous account of the progress of the work which the world would otherwise possess is lacking.

Bishop Thomas Percy, he of the *Reliques*, gives this

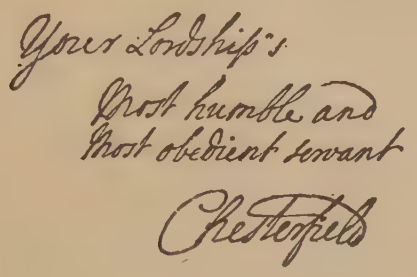
version of operations in the Gough Square word-factory gleaned at first-hand from Johnson: "He began his task by devoting his first care to a diligent perusal of all such English writers as were most correct in their language, and under every sentence which he meant to quote he drew a line and noted in the margin the first letter of the word under which it was to occur. He then delivered these books to his clerks, who transcribed each sentence on a separate slip of paper, and arranged the same under the word referred to. By these means he collected the several words and their different significations; and when the whole arrangement was alphabetically formed, he gave the definitions of their meanings, and collected their etymologies from Skinner, Junius, and other writers on the subject."

III

The part which Lord Chesterfield played in the dictionary enterprise—or rather the part that he did not play—is a familiar story, just as the letter which his conduct evoked from Johnson is one of the best-known communications in documented history. The Earl, after withholding his support for seven years following the publication of the *Plan*, finally wrote a couple of pleasant blurbs for the weekly press in the apparent hope that the work might be dedicated to him—and in that day authors knew how to write dedications. "Such a compliment," he doubtless reasoned to himself, in the words of Sir Leslie Stephen, "would add a feather to my cap, and enable me to appear to the world as a patron of literature as well as an authority upon manners." But Samuel Johnson rea-

soned somewhat otherwise. "I have sailed a long and painful voyage round the world of the English language," he said in the presence of David Garrick and others, "and does he now send out two cockboats to tow me into harbor?"

Thereupon sounded, as Carlyle says, "the far-famed blast of doom proclaiming into the ear of Lord Chesterfield and through him, of the listening world, that patronage should be no more." For "is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached the ground encumbers him with help? The notice which you have



been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it."

Johnson himself later characterized the letter in Boswell's presence as "expressed in civil terms, but such as might shew him that I did not mind what he said or wrote, and that I had done with him." What the Earl did with the original no one knows, but anyone may guess. It is against human nature to preserve such unequivocal

documents, and the Earl, despite his elegance, doubtless had an abundance of the earthier commodity. In 1781 Johnson dictated the letter to Boswell from memory. Boswell adds that Johnson "afterwards found among his papers a copy of it, which he had dictated to Mr. Baretti, with its title and corrections in his own handwriting. This he gave to Mr. Langton; adding, that if it were to come into print, he wished it to be from that copy." This draft ultimately reached the British Museum.

IV

The long preface to the *Dictionary* concluded with these moving words:

> In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed; and though no book was ever spared out of tenderness to the authour, and the world is little solicitous to know whence proceeded the faults of that which it condemns; yet it may gratify curiosity to inform it, that the *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow: and it may repress the triumph of malignant criticism to observe, that if our language is not here fully displayed, I have only failed in an attempt which no human powers have hitherto completed. . . . I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please, have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds: I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise.

It is possible that John Wilkes, "infidel demagogue" and stormy petrel of Georgian politics, did not read the

preface; it is certain that he at least bestowed a glance on *A Grammar of the English Tongue* which followed it. His eye paused at the declaration that

> H is a note of aspiration, and shows that the following vowel must be pronounced with a strong emission of the breath, as *hat, horse.*
>
> It seldom, perhaps never, begins any but the first syllable, in which it is always sounded with a full breath, except in *heir, herb, hostler, honour, humble, humour,* and their derivatives.

Not long thereafter the following communication "To the Printer" was made public:

> How much the *English Letters* are indebted to Mr Samuel Johnson *A. M.* you will judge from the following Specimen of the Grammar prefix'd to his *English Dictionary.*
>
> "*H* seldom, perhaps never, begins any but the first syllable, in which it is always sounded with a full breath, except in *heir, herb,* hostler, *honour, humble, honest, humour,* and their derivatives."
>
> The author of this remark must be a man of quick *appre-hension,* and *compre-hensive* genius; but I can never forgive his *un-hand-some be-haviour* to the poor *knight-hood, priest-hood,* and *widow-hood,* nor his *in-humanity* to all *man-hood* and *woman-hood.* I do not indeed wonder at so great a Scholar's disregarding a *maiden-head,* but should he dare to treat the *God-head* with neglect? It *be-hooves* us to detect the *fals-hoods* of this writer, and his *ad-herents*; yet *be-hold!* his modesty keeps pace with his learning. In his Preface he says, "I have devoted this Book, the labour of years, to the honour of my country." If this is the *honour* of our country, it is (to quote Milton) *honour dis-honourable:* But how *un-happy* are we in mistaking our talents! This writer might have been of *real service* to his country as a *cow-herd,* or a *goat-herd,* or the simplicity of a *shep-herd* would very well become him. As a *hostler,* he would have encreased his little stock of science, for he would have heard all his *English* guests crying out to him, *hostler* with a strong aspiration, and

never *ostler*. But there is, on recollection, another employment he is still fitter for: I mean that of *Haberdas-her* of small wares; a trade which bears so great an affinity to his present business of piddling in words and syllables, that the transformation would be easier than any in the *Metamorphosis;* that of the nymph *Charybdis* into a whirlpool only excepted. In this occupation he would, in all *likeli-hood*, leave all competitors far *be-hind* him; and though he says he is *un-healthy*, he might pursue it *un-hurt*, and for the most part *un-hous'd*— So much for this *logger-head*.

Johnson was *touché*, but he nursed his wound in silence. In the third (1765) edition of the *Dictionary* (the second appeared in 1755–6) "H seldom, perhaps never except in compounded words," began any but the first syllable; in the fourth (1773) edition the inserted phrase was omitted and this sentence added after the original statement: "It sometimes begins middle or final syllables in words compounded, as *blockhead*; or derived from the Latin, as *comprehended*." Meanwhile in 1770 there had been an exchange of political pamphlets between Johnson and Wilkes, but this sharp little skirmish was quite unrelated to the battle of the letter H.

Not until the fateful year of 1776 did Wilkes and Johnson come face to face. Boswell describes the incident at length, detailing with joyous naïveté the elaborate devices by which he inveigled Johnson into attending a dinner at the "hospitable and well-covered table" of Charles and Edward Dilly (it was Charles who was to publish the great *Life* in 1791) and the adroitness with which he won Johnson's promise not to make a scene regardless of whom the Dillys might assemble as guests. The exultant Boswell got his charge into a hackney-coach and duly delivered him. Then:

When we entered Mr. Dilly's drawing-room, he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know. I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself. I observed him whispering to Mr. Dilly, "Who is that gentleman, Sir?"—"Mr. Arthur Lee."—JOHNSON: "Too, too, too" (under his breath), which was one of his habitual mutterings. Mr. Arthur

BOSWELL AND JOHNSON, FROM THE CARICATURE BY ROWLANDSON

From Picturesque Beauties of Boswell (*London, 1786*)

Lee could not but be very obnoxious to Johnson, for he was not only a *patriot* but an *American*. He was afterwards minister from the United States at the court of Madrid. "And who is the gentleman in lace?"—"Mr. Wilkes, Sir." This information confounded him still more; he had some difficulty to restrain himself, and taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat and read, or at least kept his eye upon it intently for some time, till he composed himself.

Dinner is announced, and Mr. Wilkes is seated fairly beside the Doctor, on whom he bestows every attention:

Mr. Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. "Pray give me leave, Sir;— It is better here— A little of the brown— Some fat, Sir— A little of the stuffing— Some gravy— Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter— Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange;—or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest."—"Sir, Sir, I am obliged to you, Sir," cried Johnson, bowing and turning his head to him with a look for some time of "surly virtue," but, in a short while, of complacency.

Soon they are discussing not the comparative zest of orange and lemon juice, but Garrick, Shakespeare, Horace, Elkanah Settle, Scotland:

Johnson (to Mr. Wilkes): "You must know, Sir, I lately took my friend Boswell, and shewed him genuine civilized life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield, my native city, that he might see for once real civility: for you know he lives among savages in Scotland, and among rakes in London." Wilkes: "Except when he is with grave, sober, decent people, like you and me." Johnson (smiling): "And we ashamed of him."

Almost five years to the day pass before Johnson and Wilkes meet again, also at the Dillys'. Boswell and the land of Boswell are still fair game:

Wilkes: "I have been thinking, Dr. Johnson, that there should be a bill brought into Parliament that the controverted elections for Scotland should be tried in that country, at their own abbey of Holyrood House, and not here; for the consequence of trying them here is, that we have an inundation of Scotchmen who come up and never go back again. Now here is Boswell, who is

come upon the election for his own county, which will not last a fortnight." JOHNSON: "Nay, Sir, I see no reason why they should be tried at all; for, you know, one Scotchman is as good as another." WILKES: "Pray, Boswell, how much may be got in a year by an advocate at the Scotch bar?" BOSWELL: "I believe two thousand pounds." WILKES: "How can it be possible to spend that money in Scotland?" JOHNSON: "Why, Sir, the money may be spent in England; but there is a harder question. If one man in Scotland gets possession of two thousand pounds, what remains for all the rest of the nation?"

The evening passes in a variety of discourse; even the thin ice of politics is trod without mishap. After a while

the company gradually dropped away. Mr. Dilly himself was called down stairs upon business; I left the room for some time; when I returned, I was struck with observing Dr. Samuel Johnson and John Wilkes, Esq., literally tête-à-tête; for they were reclined upon their chairs, with their heads leaning almost close to each other, and talking earnestly, in a kind of confidential whisper, of the personal quarrel between George the Second and the King of Prussia. Such a scene of perfectly easy sociality between two such opponents in the war of political controversy, as that which I now beheld, would have been an excellent subject for a picture. It presented to my mind the happy days which are foretold in Scripture, when the lion shall lie down with the kid.

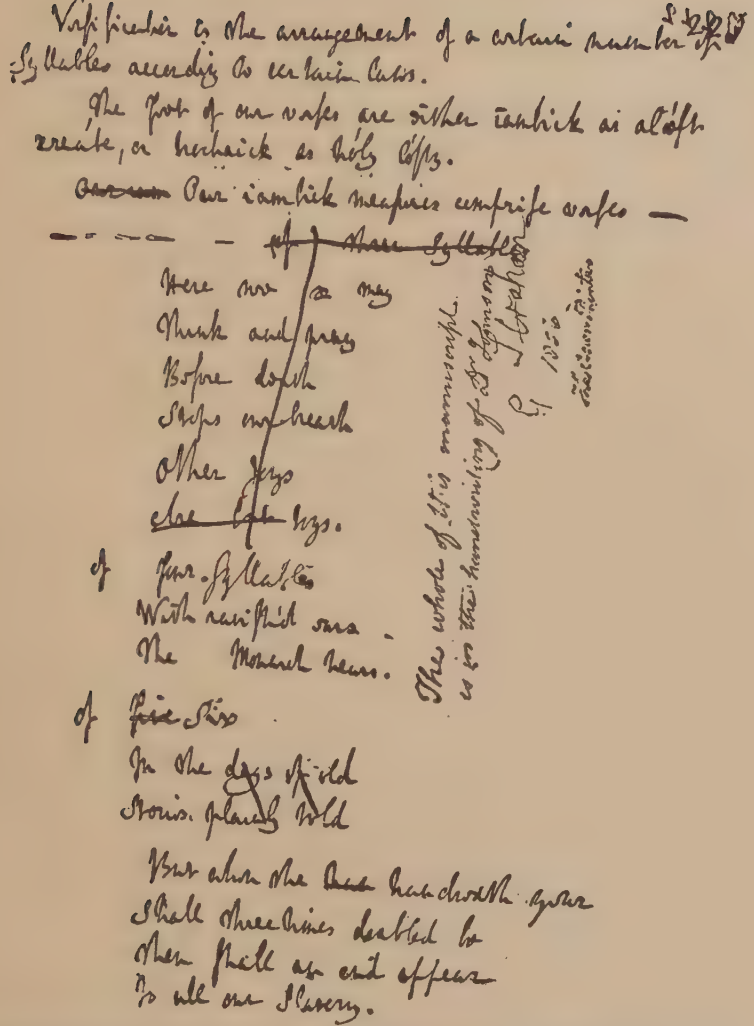
Johnson and Wilkes met at least once more, this time at Johnson's. Wilkes "was courteously received, and sat with him a long time"—Boswell, obviously, was not present to receive and record any further raillery about Scotland. There is no evidence to indicate that the peculiarities of the aspirate were alluded to at any of these causeries.

V

The host of definitions in the *Dictionary* which exhibit the crotchets of the compiler or which are unadulterated blunders have been so frequently cited—Boswell himself began it by selecting a dozen or so—that there has grown up a rather commonly-held assumption that the work is a vast compendium of unconscious humor. On the contrary it is, of course, a landmark in the science of lexicography no less than a noble monument to the industry and genius of its compiler and to the devotion of Messrs. Shiels, Stewart, Maitland, Peyton, and the two Macbeans.

For all that, the world will go on quoting the familiar conceits and shortcomings that have endeared themselves to it (and the Doctor along with them) ever since John Wilkes pounced upon the letter H. Nor can the world be blamed, for they add to the joy of life and to a comprehension of the man. One would not ordinarily look for intimacy (the attribute, not the word) in a dictionary, but Johnson's *Dictionary* is the most intimate thing he ever wrote.

The best brief summary of the *Dictionary's* defects, both amusing and serious, is to be found in the Johnson bibliography prepared by William Prideaux Courtney and seen through the press, following Mr. Courtney's death, by David Nichol Smith. Here one learns, without going to the ponderous pains of searching them out in the *Dictionary*, that *death's-door* "is now a low phrase," that *deft* is "obsolete," that *flirtation* is "a cant word among women" and *finesse* "an unnecessary word



SHEET OF DICTIONARY MANUSCRIPT IN JOHNSON'S HAND

From A Grammar of the English Tongue, *preceding the main body of the definitions*

which is creeping into the language," that *giggle* "is retained in Scotland" (which certainly puts giggling in its

A

DICTIONARY

OF THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE:

IN WHICH

The WORDS are deduced from their ORIGINALS,

AND

ILLUSTRATED in their DIFFERENT SIGNIFICATIONS

BY

EXAMPLES from the best WRITERS.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

A HISTORY of the LANGUAGE,

AND

AN ENGLISH GRAMMAR.

By SAMUEL JOHNSON, A.M.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Cum tabulis animum censoris sumet honesti:
Audebit quæcunque parum splendoris habebunt,
Et sine pondere erunt, et honore indigna ferentur.
Verba movere loco; quamvis invita recedant,
Et versentur adhuc intra penetralia Vestæ.
Obscurata diu populo bonus eruet, atque
Proferet in lucem speciosa vocabula rerum,
Quæ priscis memorata Catonibus atque Cethegis,
Nunc sitis informis premat et deserta vetustas. HOR.

LONDON,
Printed by W. STRAHAN,
For J. and P. KNAPTON; T. and T. LONGMAN; C. HITCH and L. HAWES;
A. MILLAR; and R. and J. DODSLEY.
MDCCLV.

The lexicographer did not become Dr. Johnson until ten years after the appearance of the famous Dictionary

place), that *guerdon* is "a word now no longer in use," that *ignoramus* is "a low word," that *jeopardy* is "not now

in use," that *loon* is "now used only in Scotland," that *lesser* is "a barbarous corruption of less," *restrict* "a word scarce English," *ruse* "a French word neither elegant nor necessary," and that *succumb* is "not in use, except among the Scotch" (Scotland, the land where giggling loons succumb). Johnson's Scotophobia reached the peak of notoriety in the famous definition of *oats:* "A grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people," which drew from Lord Elibank the equally famous reply: "Very true, and where will you find such men and such horses?" Perhaps Johnson had this retort in mind when he said: "I never was in Lord Elibank's company without learning something."

The *Dictionary* attains its closest approximation to the ludicrous in those definitions which are phrased with a sesquipedalian pomposity that utterly confounds the earnest seeker after truth by blasting him with the grape-shot of half a dozen incomprehensible terms in place of the single one for which he desires to know the meaning. The Courtney-Smith bibliography cites classic examples:

> The definitions of Johnson have often formed the subject of jest through his love of explaining an ordinary word in grandiloquent terms. *Network* is the best known of these portentous descriptions. The definition runs: "any thing reticulated or decussated, at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections." In its turn *reticulated* becomes "made of network; formed with interstitial vacuities." Another good sample of this high and mighty language is *blister*, a harmless trouble in ordinary life, but to Johnson "a pustule formed by raising the cuticle from the cutis, and filled with serous blood." So, too, the *cough* of daily life is magnified into "a convulsion of the lungs, vellicated by some sharp serosity," and *dross* is naught but "the recrement or despumation of metals."

It would be wholly inaccurate to assume that Johnson was unaware of the deficiencies and the scattered absurdities of the *Dictionary;* he makes honest blanket confession of them and defies posterity to do its worst in the "Advertisement to the Fourth Edition":

> Many are the works of human industry, which to begin and finish are hardly granted to the same man. He that undertakes to compile a *Dictionary*, undertakes that, which, if it comprehends the full extent of his design, he knows himself unable to perform. Yet his labours, though deficient, may be useful, and with the hope of this inferior praise, he must incite his activity, and solace his weariness.
>
> Perfection is unattainable, but nearer and nearer approaches may be made; and finding my *Dictionary* about to be reprinted, I have endeavoured, by a revisal, to make it less reprehensible. I will not deny that I found many parts requiring emendation, and many more capable of improvement. Many faults I have corrected, some superfluities I have taken away, and some deficiencies I have supplied. I have methodised some parts that were disordered and illuminated some that were obscure. Yet the changes or additions bear a very small proportion to the whole. The critick will now have less to object, but the student who has bought any of the former copies needs not repent; he will not, without nice collation, perceive how they differ; and usefulness seldom depends upon little things.
>
> For negligence or deficience, I have perhaps not need of more apology than the nature of the work will furnish; I have left that inaccurate which never was made exact, and that imperfect which never was completed.

VI

When copies of Johnson's *Dictionary* in its earliest form are catalogued for sale they are almost invariably desig-

nated as of the "first edition, first issue." There is no more excuse for this bit of lily-painting than there is for the equally common and equally reprehensible instance of it which is provided in the alleged "first issue" of *The Scarlet Letter*. The much-advertised "point" in the case of the *Dictionary* is the apparent confusion of words under V. "First issue, with the words beginning with U and V transposed," the catalogue description often reads, with flagrant inaccuracy, for if the words were merely transposed, then those beginning with U would follow as a unit those beginning with V. Instead, the words beginning with U are peppered about among the V's in an apparent triumph of the pi-maker's art. The following table exhibits the shifts that occur from beginning to end among the V's:

vacancy...	vexer	ulcer....	uveous
vaward	uglily....	unzoned	vulcano....
uberty....	ugly	vocabulary....	vulturine
uddered	vial....	voyager	uvula....
veal....	vizier	up....	uxoriousness

But this seeming confusion is no confusion at all. It is fully explained by Johnson himself at the head of the V division:

> V has two powers, expressed in modern English by two characters, *V* consonant and *U* vowel, which ought to be considered as two letters; but as they were long confounded while the two uses were annexed to one form, the old custom still continues to be followed.

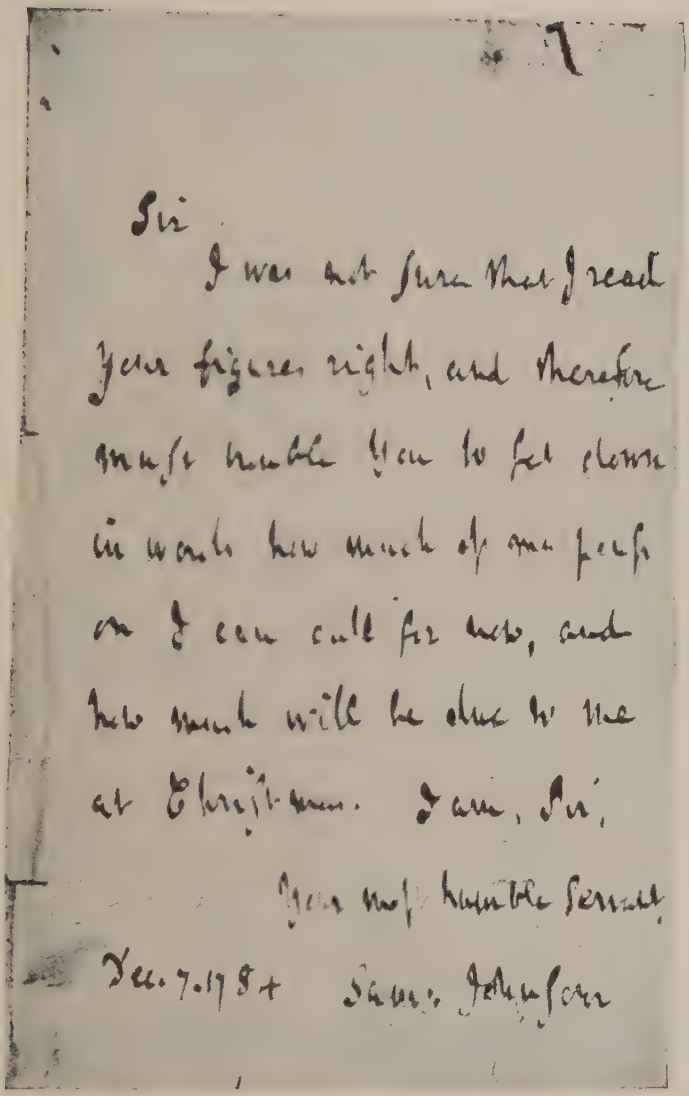
Thus in the *Dictionary* the words beginning with U and V are not differentiated according to their initial letters,

but are tabulated in the proper alphabetical sequence regardless of their initial letters.

The words under U and V are grouped in identical fashion in the "first American, from the eleventh London edition," published in 1818 at Philadelphia "by Moses Thomas (Johnson's Head) No. 52 Chesnut-Street"—the *Dictionary* itself, by the way, gives no authority for this phonetic rendering of *chestnut*. A much-condensed pocket version had appeared at Boston in 1804 and had been several times reprinted, but the Philadelphia edition of 1818 was complete, its two fat quarto volumes making together almost a perfect cube.

Until a few years ago the first edition of the *Dictionary* was an inexpensive book. The powerful revival of Johnsonian interest since the World War, however, has been reflected in a demand that has sent the price of the *Dictionary* to heights that would amaze the collector of a generation ago. At the Jerome Kern sale at the Anderson Galleries in New York in January, 1929, a copy with the top and lower edges uncut sold for $850—ordinary trimmed copies bring in the neighborhood of from $300 to $500. The Kern copy of the *Plan* of 1747 sold for $800—the *Plan* is scarce, the *Dictionary* itself comparatively common. A page of manuscript defining and illustrating versification (in *A Grammar of the English Tongue*) in Johnson's hand brought $11,000 at the Kern sale. The fragment was obviously an early (perhaps the earliest) draft, for the printed text differs in some details from the manuscript.

Johnson's own copy of the *Dictionary*, "with MSS. notes," sold for thirty shillings when his library was dispersed at public sale in 1785—the *Dictionary* had sold



Sir

I was not sure that I read
your figures right, and therefore
must trouble You to let them
in words how much of one pound
on I can call for now, and
how much will be due to me
at Christmas. I am, Sir,

Your most humble Servant

Dec. 7. 1784 Sam. Johnson

JOHNSON'S LAST LETTER

Written to William Strahan, his legal adviser and one of the publishers of the Dictionary. *Johnson died six days later*

new, thirty years earlier, for ninety shillings. For that matter, his First Folio Shakespeare fetched only twenty-two shillings, his third Folio eleven. The sale catalogue was reissued in facsimile in 1925 with an introduction by A. Edward Newton which was written in the very room in the Gough Square house whence the *Dictionary* fared forth into the world. The introduction is a delight; the catalogue itself, as the above quotations testify, must ever be a source of acute distress.

VII

On a historic occasion Miss Rebecca Sharp flung a copy of Johnson's *Dictionary* out of a carriage window into the garden of Miss Pinkerton's Academy for Young Ladies on Chiswick Mall, to the eternal consternation of the donor. No less an authority than Miss Sharp's creator affirms that she was "small and slight in person"—that "by the side of many tall and bouncing young ladies in the establishment" she "looked like a child." The same authority testifies that following her summary and effective parting gesture of contempt, Miss Sharp still had breath enough to explain to her astonished carriage mate, Miss Amelia Sedley, "So much for the Dixonary; and, thank God, I'm out of Chiswick."

Sufficient evidence is thus provided to make it certain that the copy of the *Dictionary* which Miss Sharp landed neatly in the path of Miss Jemima Pinkerton was not of the first edition. Miss Sharp could as easily have pitched Big Ben across the Thames. Nor could the tallest and bouncingest of Miss Pinkerton's charges have hoped to accomplish the same feat with one, still less with both of

the massive volumes of the *Dictionary* as its compiler originally saw it. Together they weigh, in the calf binding which usually encases them, some twenty-seven pounds.

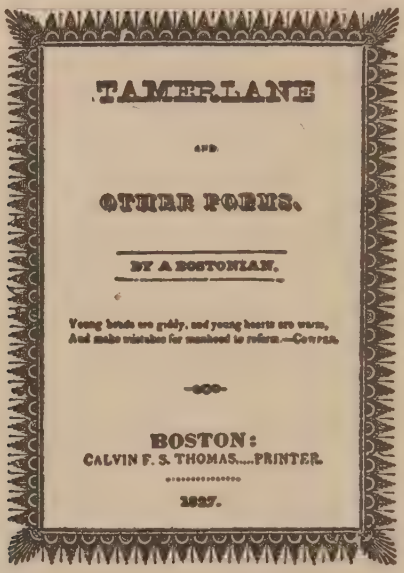
POE AND HIS *TALES*

I

IT was the probable misfortune of Calvin F. S. Thomas to be gathered to his fathers without knowing that fame had claimed him for her own. He died in Springfield, Missouri, a few years after the Civil War, more than a thousand miles and almost half a century removed from the place and time at which destiny had put her mark upon him. In 1827, not long after he had set up as a printer in Boston (he had been born in Virginia), his name had appeared at the bottom of the wrapper of a fragile forty-page pamphlet called *Tamerlane and Other Poems*. Tamerlane and Calvin F. S. Thomas were the only historical characters who were unequivocally identified; the author himself was shrouded in reasonably complete anonymity as "a Bostonian."

The anonymity, in fact, was double. The "Bostonian" was almost certainly known to Thomas as Private Edgar A. Perry, Battery H, First Artillery, U. S. A., stationed at Fort Independence in Boston Harbor. Perry's real name was Edgar Allan Poe, and even that was an amplification of the designation that had been given him at birth. If, therefore, the fame of Edgar Allan Poe ever came to the notice of Calvin F. S. Thomas, there was no reason on earth why Thomas should couple it with Private Perry's unimpressive excursion into literature back in the old

Boston days. A few months after the venture Thomas had gone to New York and Battery H had been transferred to Fort Moultrie, in Charleston Harbor. The late Professor George E. Woodberry, in the course of his conscientious and scholarly efforts to throw fresh light on Poe's career, had from Thomas's daughter, Mrs. Martha



TAMERLANE

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY A BOSTONIAN.

Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
And make mistakes for manhood to reform.—Cowper.

BOSTON:
CALVIN F. S. THOMAS....PRINTER.

1827.

Poe was eighteen when Tamerlane *appeared. So was Thomas, the printer*

Thomas Booth, the assurance that in all likelihood "Thomas never identified the first author he knew with the famous poet who wrote *The Raven*."

There was no reason why Thomas should have been particularly proud of the print job, any more than there was a reason why Private Perry should have taken pride in the contents of the pamphlet. Both could claim the indulgence due youths of eighteen. Thomas dressed up the

title-page wrapper of *Tamerlane* to look like a sort of specimen sheet of the types in his Washington Street shop, and surrounded the whole with one of the most remarkably hideous borders that ever came out of that shop or any other. Apparently some forty copies of the booklet were printed, and of these seven or eight are known to exist today—a fairly high percentage in view of the limitation of the original issue. There are hundreds of books, some of them American products, one or two of them by Poe himself, of which fewer than seven or eight copies survive, but *Tamerlane* has become the symbol of rare works of American literature and will doubtless continue to be so regarded to the end of time. The two latest sales of copies, both by private treaty, were for around $15,000. Had Poe written nothing more, a *Tamerlane* would be worth only a few trivial cents as an example of minor ante-bellum lyricism.

II

The son of actor parents who died before he was three year old (the mother certainly, the father in all probability, though some degree of mystery shrouds his fate), Edgar Poe was adopted by Mr. and Mrs. John Allan of Richmond. Allan was a prosperous tobacco merchant, and the change in the child's economic status was certainly for the best. He quickly became the spoiled child of childless foster parents—a change not at all for the best. Four years later, when Edgar was in his seventh year, the Allans took him to London, where Mr. Allan was to open an office now that the war with England was over and the seas once more made safe for the tobacco trade. England's

war with France was over, too, but the Allans did not know this until they reached England, for Waterloo had been fought and won two days before they sailed. They remained in England until the summer of 1820—Poe spent the interval at school, did not cross the Channel, and was never to set foot on foreign soil again.

Home again and more schooling, and early in 1826 Poe entered the University of Virginia. He remained there only until the end of that year; contrary to legend, he was not expelled, and the reputation which he made at Charlottesville as drinker and gambler would have been no reputation at all had not Poe subsequently become famous. Only four years earlier Nathaniel Hawthorne had been fined fifty cents for gambling at Bowdoin; the incident, happily, has not since been magnified to make of him a horrible example. Poe, unquestionably, played for higher stakes and probably with greater assiduity than his brother romancer, and he certainly drank harder. Generations of college students have come and gone since who have provided multitudinous instances of heavier gamblers and harder drinkers that lacked the excuse of genius. Poe's difficulty was that he was singularly susceptible to the influence of alcohol and that he gulped his liquor. The combination is always unfortunate. Gulping is still a peculiarly American mode of drinking; to it are due two impressive historical phenomena: the great American drunkard and the Eighteenth Amendment.

Back in Richmond, Poe seems to have worked for a time in Mr. Allan's counting-room (Allan's affairs had not been prospering since the return from England). A few months later, yielding to a desire that he had certainly long been nurturing, and which the counting-house

episode, if there was one, must have helped along, Poe left Richmond to see the world. He had considered a military career, and put his consideration into practise by going to Boston and enlisting in the Army in May of 1827. He met Thomas, and assembled the scattered verse of his adolescence and youth to make *Tamerlane*. Why he enlisted as Edgar A. Perry there is no means of knowing. Enlistments under false names have never been uncommon in any army; a thousand instances of it call for a thousand explanations. There is certainly no great hidden significance in Poe's adoption of an alias; it may have been the result of a whim that did not occur to him until the enlisting officer asked him who he was. His conduct as a soldier, according to his immediate commanding officer, was "unexceptionable. . . . His habits are good and intirely free from drinking." Even more impressive testimony is provided in the fact that within a few months he was promoted sergeant major—the highest enlisted rating he could obtain.

Then why not be an officer? With Allan's consent and to some extent through Allan's efforts Poe became a cadet at the United States Military Academy in July, 1830. During the previous year he had issued a second collection of poetry—rather, had reissued his first book with additions: *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems* (Baltimore, 1829). He might better have continued to devote himself to literature forthwith and thus have foregone the painful experience that awaited him at West Point—an experience for which he himself was wholly responsible. On January 28, 1831, a court martial found him guilty of absenting himself from specified parades, roll-calls, guard and academic duties, and of twice directly

disobeying the orders of the officer of the day. His dismissal was ordered and in due course approved by the Secretary of War; when he left West Point his assets consisted of a credit of twenty-four cents. He went to New York, supervised the production of a third book—another collection of material already in print with some additions, called *Poems* and labelled "Second Edition"—and left to join his father's relatives in Richmond. He made his home with his widowed aunt, Mrs. Maria Clemm.

III

The two years that followed are comparable to the "chamber-under-the-eaves" era of Hawthorne's development. Poe's emergence came in October of 1833 with the announcement that he had won first prize of fifty dollars in a contest sponsored by the *Baltimore Saturday Visiter* for the best prose story. His story was called *MS. Found in a Bottle* (no bad choice for the title of a Poe story). A poem of his, *The Coliseum,* was considered the best submitted for the poetry prize of twenty-five dollars. The *Visiter* had not counted on the possibility of such a duplication; the poetry award therefore was given to John Hill Hewitt, to whom, apparently, money was no object, for he refused cash in favor of a silver goblet on which his prowess was suitably emblazoned. To defeat Poe in a literary contest, even on a technicality, was no mean achievement; despite this claim to immortality Hewitt remained virtually unsung until 1927, when Vincent Starrett of Chicago issued a brief monograph (*One Who Knew Poe*) in which Hewitt's interesting personality is set forth, together with his rather less interesting

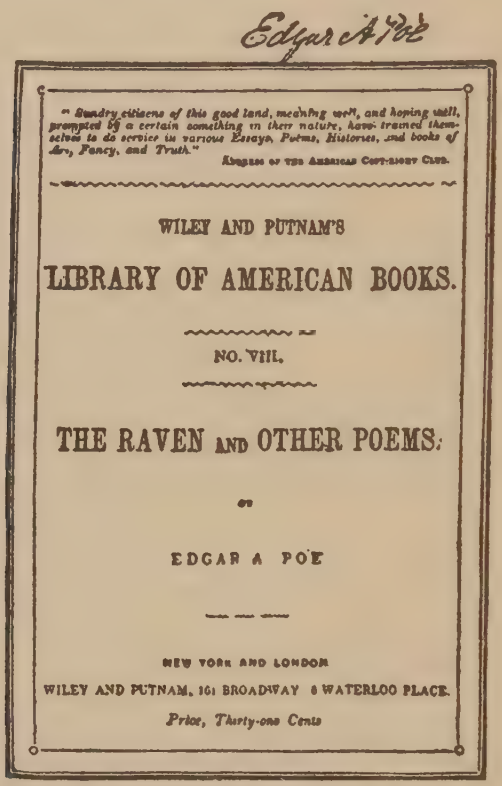
prize-winning poem, *The Song of the Wind*. As Mr. Starrett says, neither *The Coliseum* nor *The Song of the Wind* would win "even an honorable mention" in any present-day contest.

Fifty dollars in 1833 was much more than fifty dollars today, and how vast it must have looked to Poe in any generation! Literature, then, had tangible rewards. It was a new experience to Poe, at any rate. It was his introduction to his craft; thenceforward his history is part of the history of the American periodical. It is much more than that, of course, but it is that before all else.

By 1839 he had produced enough short stories which had already appeared in serial form to fill two small volumes. *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* was issued at Philadelphia in 1840, Poe receiving therefor the copyright, which was of rather less value than Mr. Hewitt's silver goblet, and twenty of the seven hundred and fifty copies of the book which were printed. Meanwhile, in 1836, he had married his cousin, Virginia Clemm, then not quite fourteen—she died early in 1847.

Poe was far from productive in the sense that Dickens and Thackeray and Irving were productive; he lacked, for one thing, the impetus provided by a clamorous public perpetually insistent for more, and the more immediate impetus of a publisher echoing the identical sentiment. Five years elapsed before the appearance of another Poe book. In 1845 came two, and they are the two on which his fame rests. One was *The Raven and Other Poems*—*The Raven* itself had first appeared in print early the same year. The other was *Tales*—a title and a book which must not be confused with *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*.

The *Tales* was issued as a 228-page pamphlet in buff wrappers, the title-page of which was a marvel of compactness. There was no preface, no list of acknowledgments of serial publication; the reader was borne at once


Edgar A Poe

" Sundry citizens of this good land, meaning well, and hoping well, prompted by a certain something in their nature, have trained themselves to do service in various Essays, Poems, Histories, and books of Art, Fancy, and Truth."

Knights of the American Copyright Club.

WILEY AND PUTNAM'S

LIBRARY OF AMERICAN BOOKS.

NO. VIII.

THE RAVEN AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

EDGAR A POE

NEW YORK AND LONDON

WILEY AND PUTNAM, 161 BROADWAY & WATERLOO PLACE.

Price, Thirty-one Cents

Poe's copy of The Raven, *with his signature on the wrapper*

into the most fascinating story of a treasure-hunt that had ever appeared in America. Of the twelve stories in the book, in fact, at least six have come to be among the best known in the language. What other great collection of

short stories can show anything like that proportion? Everyone knows two stories from *The Sketch Book;* one, perhaps two, from *The Luck of Roaring Camp,* possibly one each from *Twice-Told Tales, Mosses from an Old Manse, Wessex Tales, Soldiers Three* and *The Four Million.* But at least six (perhaps not the same six, but six anyway) of the dozen that make up the 1845 *Tales* are familiar to everyone who reads English. Here are the twelve:

The Gold Bug
The Black Cat
Mesmeric Revelation
Lionizing
The Fall of the House of Usher
A Descent into the Maelstrom
The Colloquy of Monos and Una
The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion
The Murders in the Rue Morgue
The Mystery of Marie Roget
The Purloined Letter
The Man in the Crowd

Of these, *Lionizing, The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion* had already appeared in *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.*

The *Tales* formed No. XI of Wiley and Putnam's Library of American Books, a collection which is sometimes confused with the same firm's Library of Choice Reading—it is to be hoped that no one noted the implication that American books were not choice reading. The Library of Choice Reading was one of the earliest assemblages of literary merchandise to feel the influence of the sloganeer—it was declared to consist of "books which are books." The Library of American Books had no support-

ing device, but sold, apparently, on its merits. These latter were highly unequal, as the following list of titles on the wrapper of No. VIII shows:

I. Journal of an African Cruiser. Edited by Nathaniel Hawthorne. 50 cts.

II. Tales by Edgar A. Poe. 50 cts.

III. Letters from Italy, by J. T. Headley. 50 cts.

IV. The Wigwam and the Cabin, by W. Gilmore Simms. 50 cts.

V. Big Able and the Little Manhattan, by Cornelius Mathews. 25 cts.

VI. Wanderings of a Pilgrim Under the Shadow of Mont Blanc, by George D. Cheever, D.D. 38 cts.

VII. Western Clearings, by Mary Clavers (Mrs. Kirkland), Author of "A New Home," "Who'll Follow?" "Forest Life," &c. 50 cts.

VIII. Raven and Other Poems, by Edgar A. Poe. 31 cts.

IX. Views and Reviews in American History, Literature, & Fiction, by W. G. Simms. [Just ready.]

Seven more titles were announced as "in immediate preparation," among them "a new volume by Nathaniel Hawthorne" (it proved to be *Mosses from an Old Manse*). Lacking Poe and Hawthorne the Library of American Literature would have been pretty small potatoes; their presence endowed it with imperishable glory. Any publisher of today would be happy enough if his semi-annual list could regularly assay for as high a degree of immortality.

IV

The *Tales* was a triumph of literature, even though the moment did not unanimously so regard it. The testi-

monials which Wiley and Putnam featured strongly in their advertising included these: "Characteristic tales of thrilling interest" (Boston *Courier*), "written with much power and effect" (New Haven *Courant*), "will be hailed by many as a rare treat" (New York *Post*)—the last comment seems the apotheosis of conservative ineptness in criticism.

But the *Tales* was a triumph of editing as well. The selection of the stories had not been made by Poe, but by Evert A. Duyckinck. Duyckinck's father was a pioneer New York publisher. A man of some means, Duyckinck abandoned law for literature not long after graduating from Columbia in 1835, and thereafter until his death in 1878 his name was associated with numerous endeavors to perpetuate the worthiest in American letters. Poe, however, was displeased with the choice of stories. "Those selected," he wrote a friend, "are *not* my best, nor do they fairly represent me in any respect." Duyckinck knew better than Poe, and Duyckinck anticipated the judgment of posterity. Nor did Poe subsequently produce anything that might have been worth substituting for the best in the *Tales*. He died in Baltimore, October 7, 1849. Five days later was the sixteenth anniversary of the announcement of the *Saturday Visiter* prize.

Despite the fact that the 1845 *Tales* is the most significant of Poe books, it lags far behind his other works from the point of view of collection value. This is due, of course, only to the fact that it is more readily accessible to the collector. *Tamerlane*, *Al Aaraaf* and the *Poems* of 1831 are all virtually unobtainable; *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* is commoner than any of these, but far scarcer than the *Tales*. The *Tales* itself is scarce enough

in the original wrappers; the last quotation in this form listed in *American Book Prices Current* was $60 in January, 1926, for a copy with several defects. A copy in full

T A L E S

BY

EDGAR A. POE.

NEW YORK:
WILEY AND PUTNAM, 161 BROADWAY.

1845.

The title-page of the Tales *was a model of succinctness*

levant sold for $35 late in 1927. The *Tales* and *The Raven* were also issued in 1845 (probably remaindered copies) in a single cloth-bound volume—the latest quota-

tion for this item is $260 early in 1928. Two months later Poe's own copy of *The Raven*, in the original wrappers, and with his signature on the wrapper, brought $7600.

Two years before the appearance of the *Tales*, Poe seems to have conceived the idea of issuing his stories in cheap pamphlet form as a "uniform serial edition." Seven years earlier *Pickwick* had set the pace for books issued in parts, and in the interval, of Dickens's writings alone, *Pickwick*, *Sketches by Boz*, *Oliver Twist*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge* had all appeared serially in America. Only a single number of *The Prose Romances of Edgar A. Poe* was printed, and even that may not have actually been published—it contained *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and *The Man That Was Used Up*, of which the latter had been included in *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*. Its probable history is thus summarized in Milton Waldman's *Americana: The Literature of American History* (New York, 1925):

> The book was cheaply made up, with the title printed on the brown paper wrapper; in every authentic copy the first page, on which the story begins, is number 9. . . . It is altogether probable that the first eight pages of the thin octavo were intended to contain the customary advertising matter; the dummies were printed and supplied to the solicitors whose task it was to fill those first four leaves with the desired advertising. Apparently they failed, and the publishers, seeing no profit in the bare sale of the text, decided to discontinue the entire project. It is certain that no more of the booklets followed No. 1; it seems almost as certain that the latter itself was carried no further than the printing of a score or so of the dummy copies. . . . *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* did not turn up at auction until 1901, when the F. W. French copy went for $1000. . . . C. B. Foote, an

enthusiastic and highly successful collector, sent out ten thousand inquiries in the effort to obtain it, without success.

Four copies of this pamphlet are known to exist—half the quantity of surviving *Tamerlanes*. The last and finest was unearthed early in 1929, and was sold for $20,000. The history of the earliest discovered copy is thus related by George H. Sargent:

> The late George D. Smith, going along Cornhill in Boston one day, noticed this pamphlet, about which he knew nothing, in a box outside the store (Colesworthy's). He went in and bought it for fifteen cents. Taking it back to New York, he sold it to Scribners for $60. A little later they sold it to Frederick W. French, who was then collecting American firsts, for $120. It then disappeared until after his death, when his books were sold at Libbie's. I sat directly behind George D. Smith, and Scribners' representative was in the row ahead of him. Scribners bid it up to $800 and retired. Smith bid $850, and then he went out when an unknown buyer got it for $1000. The unknown buyer was a librarian who was bidding on commission, the copy going into the Morgan Library.

An interesting history surrounds the adventures of the manuscript of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, the most famous story in the *Tales*, and the most significant from the point of view of its influence on the technique of fiction—had the *Murders* never been written there would never have been a Sherlock Holmes, a M. Lecoq, a Dr. Thorndyke, a Hercule Poirot, a Philo Vance, a Charlie Chan, a Father Brown, or a Lord Peter Wimsey. The story originally appeared in *Graham's Magazine* of Philadelphia for April, 1841. The manuscript was tossed into a wastebasket, whence it was rescued, for reasons unknown,

by a printer—J. M. Johnston. Johnston sometime afterward went to Lancaster, worked on the *Intelligencer*, and later opened a photograph gallery. He served through the Civil War in the 79th Pennsylvania Infantry; fortunately no one troubled the manuscript during his absence.

After the war the building sheltering it was twice partly destroyed by fire, but the manuscript happened to be in the surviving portion. Then a careless hand tossed it on a dust heap, whence, by some incredible chance, it was rescued. It had suffered a few scars in this series of adventures, so Johnston had it bound. Eventually he sold it to George W. Childs, the indefatigable Philadelphia collector, for two hundred dollars. Childs willed it to the Drexel Institute, and there, worth far more than two hundred times two hundred dollars, it rests in security today.

LEWIS CARROLL AND *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND*

I

THE eighty-sixth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence was the least glorious of Fourths. Three days earlier President Lincoln had issued a call for six hundred thousand more volunteers—a handsome compliment to the prowess of a former superintendent of the United States Military Academy who, as General Robert E. Lee, C.S.A., had just been made commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. All was not quiet along the Potomac, nor yet along the Mississippi, where the guns of Vicksburg barred the road to the Gulf while a taciturn Yankee named Grant bided his time and consoled himself with the assurance that he had won the only substantial victory that could be accredited to the Federal arms in fifteen months of war.

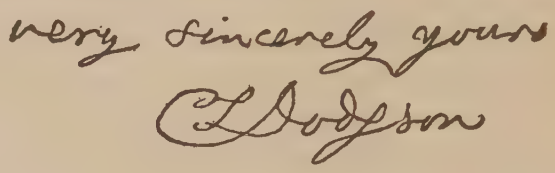
The agony of a nation in a death struggle for existence doubtless meant little enough to the Misses Lorina, Alice and Edith Liddell. Certainly it meant less than nothing to them on this Fourth of July of 1862. They were listening to the story of a little girl like themselves who wandered down into a rabbit hole and had all sorts of marvellous adventures. The historian was a mathematical lecturer at Christ Church College, Oxford, who, although he had just turned thirty, had already published some *Notes on*

the First Two Books of Euclid, A Syllabus of Plain Algebraical Geometry, The Formulæ of Plain Trigonometry and one or two other related works which might have been calculated to strike terror into the hearts of the young. The little girls' father, however, had himself collaborated in the preparation of a Greek lexicon, and was, moreover, as dean of Christ Church, in a sense the employer of the mathematical lecturer. There was no real reason, therefore, why the little girls should be afraid of the young man, even though, in addition, having taken orders a few months earlier, he could write Reverend before his name as well as M.A. after it.

The Cherwell at Oxford was certainly a much more delightful place to row, on July 4, 1862, than either the Potomac or the Mississippi. On that afternoon the mathematical lecturer and the three little Liddells had journeyed some two miles up stream as far as Godstow, enjoyed tea on the bank, and listened to the tale of *Alice's Adventures Under Ground.* The watchful batteries of Vicksburg were many thousand miles away. And the guns of Flanders, before whom Alice Hargreaves's two sons were to fall gallantly more than half a century later—ah, how much farther away were they than the guns of Vicksburg!

The mathematical lecturer's name was Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, and he was the life of the party. He had been the presiding genius of many a party before. In 1843, when he was eleven years old, he had constructed one of the first toy railroads in history in the garden of a Yorkshire vicarage (Mr. Dodgson was one minister's son who made good); the stations, of which there were several, were equipped with refreshment rooms, and tickets

were required of passengers. He could do tricks—real sleight-of-hand tricks. He had constructed marionettes, written plays for them, and pulled the strings. And he had killed the tedium of a dull winter day by fashioning a maze in the snow that was a model of perplexity. Puzzles, indeed, were always a sort of passion with him; so, by a natural evolution, was mathematics; so was amateur



photography in a day when amateur photographers were rather less common than amateur aviators are today. So were children—particularly, one may almost say exclusively, little girls. He loved them with the wistfulness that is not at all uncommon in lifelong bachelors, but he had what few bachelors and not too many fathers own—the capacity for delighting them.

Mr. Dodgson was more than a skilled mathematician and story teller. He had written several pieces of comic verse which had enjoyed periodical publication, and as he did not want to have the two personalities of mathematician and versifier confused, he had designed a pseudonym. He had toyed with the surname Dares—the first syllable of Daresbury, Cheshire, where he was born; he had anagramed Charles Lutwidge into Edgar Cuthwellis and then into Edgar U. C. Westhill; he had Latinized Charles into Carolus and Lutwidge into Ludovicus, reversed the order, translated one element, and got Louis Carroll; euphony, perhaps, suggested Lewis Carroll.

Along the placid reaches of the Cherwell July 4th was, of course, only the day after July 3d. This July 4th of 1862 Alice Liddell remembered as a day of such heat —almost a Fourth *à l'américaine*—as to make the rest on the banks a far more pleasurable incident than the row on the river. The story was perhaps all the more delightful on that account, and Mr. Dodgson promised to write it out for Alice. Once in Alice Liddell's hands, the manuscript left them only twice—first in 1885, when she lent it to Mr. Dodgson so that a facsimile edition might be made, and again in 1928, when, at one of the most memorable auction sessions ever held at Sotheby's in London, it was knocked down to Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach of America for $75,250. It is now owned by Eldridge R. Johnson of Moorestown, New Jersey, who after acquiring it kindly permitted its exhibition in public libraries throughout America.

"There was no idea of publication in my mind when I wrote this little book," Lewis Carroll declared in his introduction to the facsimile edition of 1886. "That was wholly an afterthought, pressed on me by the 'perhaps too partial friends' who always have to bear the blame when a writer rushes into print." The most culpable of these friends appears to have been George Macdonald. Few today are the readers of *David Elginbrod* and *Robert Falconer*, but Macdonald's service to joyous literature would still be immeasurable had he never written a line. He had a son and a daughter, Greville and Mary, and it is quite likely that Lewis Carroll told the *Alice* story to them in their father's presence. At any rate Macdonald knew about the story and prevailed on its author to show it to a publisher.

The rather new firm of Macmillan and Co., who at the time were running strongly to religious works, with a copious sprinkling of mathematical, agreed to undertake the venture. Lewis Carroll had doubts of his own worth as an illustrator, despite his accomplishments in the manuscript he had sent to Alice, and suggested a more capable hand. By great good fortune he was able to win the co-operation of John (not yet Sir John) Tenniel, who had already made an excellent flying start on the twenty-three hundred cartoons which he was to draw for *Punch* before his retirement in 1901. An agreement was concluded with Tenniel in April, 1864. Nine months later the book appeared. It was called neither *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* nor *Alice's Hour in Elfland* (a title it enjoyed in its intermediate stage), but *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. On July 4, 1865 (America was observing its eighty-ninth birthday in the shadow of Lincoln's martyrdom), the first presentation copy was put in the hands of Alice Liddell.

II

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland did not prove, on publication, to be a sensational seller, though it was a successful venture. Not until the fifth edition, three years later, was the book printed from stereotype plates. It gathered such momentum, however, that when its sequel, *Through the Looking Glass*, was published in 1872 the trade demand was so great that eight thousand copies of the new book had been absorbed before Lewis Carroll received his own copies. In 1885, twenty years after the first *Alice*, the books had sold, together, some 120,000

of her own little sister. So the boat wound slowly along, beneath the bright summer-day, with its merry crew and its music of voices and laughter, till it passed round one of the many turnings of the stream, and she saw it no more.

Then she thought, (in a dream within the dream, as it were,) how this same little Alice would, in the after-time, be herself a grown woman: and how she would keep, through her riper years, the simple and loving heart of her childhood: and how she would gather around her other little children, and make their eyes bright and eager with many a wonderful tale, perhaps even with these very adventures of the little Alice of long-ago: and how she would feel with all their simple sorrows, and find a pleasure in all their simple joys, remembering her own child-life, and the happy summer days.

THE ORIGINAL ALICE

From a photograph by Lewis Carroll pasted on the last page of the manuscript of Alice's Adventures Under Ground

copies in English editions. By 1898, the year of Lewis Carroll's death, the English total was in excess of two hundred and sixty thousand. It is safe to assume that, counting American editions and translations, well over half a million copies—possibly well toward a million—had been circulated by the end of the century. Since then the figure has mounted to a vast total which there is no means of calculating.

The steady accrual of fame no less than of royalties that came with the universal acceptance of the two stories seems to have put their author in an emotional condition comparable to that experienced by a shy man who is suddenly thrust forth on a platform before the eyes of ten thousand enthusiastic admirers. It is plain that he detested being lionized but was too gentle to make forcible remonstrance. He adopted, therefore, the practice of assuming, even to himself, that Lewis Carroll and the Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson were distinct individuals. In the early 1890's Edward Bok, whose *Ladies' Home Journal* was the sensation of the decade, called on him at Oxford and suggested that he write a sequel to the *Alice* books.

"You are quite in error, Mr. Bok," was the reply. "You are not speaking to the person you think you are addressing."

"Do I understand, Mr. Dodgson," persisted Bok, "that you are not Lewis Carroll, that you did not write *Alice in Wonderland?*"

Mr. Dodgson vanished, to return presently with a copy of his *Elementary Treatise on Determinants* which he handed to the American.

"This is my book," he said.

Mr. Bok records (in *The Americanization of Edward Bok*) that "the face was absolutely without expression save a kindly compassion intended to convey to the editor that he was making a terrible mistake."

"As I said to you in the beginning, Mr. Bok, you are in error," Mr. Dodgson continued. "You are not speaking to Lewis Carroll." A pause. "Is this the first time you have visited Oxford?"

"There followed the most delightful two hours," Mr. Bok relates, terminating with luncheon together. "But all efforts to return to 'Lewis Carroll' were futile." When the editor departed in company with the Oxford don who had sponsored him, the latter said: "That is his attitude toward all, even toward me. He is not 'Lewis Carroll' to anyone; is extremely sensitive on the point, and will not acknowledge his identity. That is why he lives so much to himself. He is in daily dread that someone will mention *Alice* in his presence."

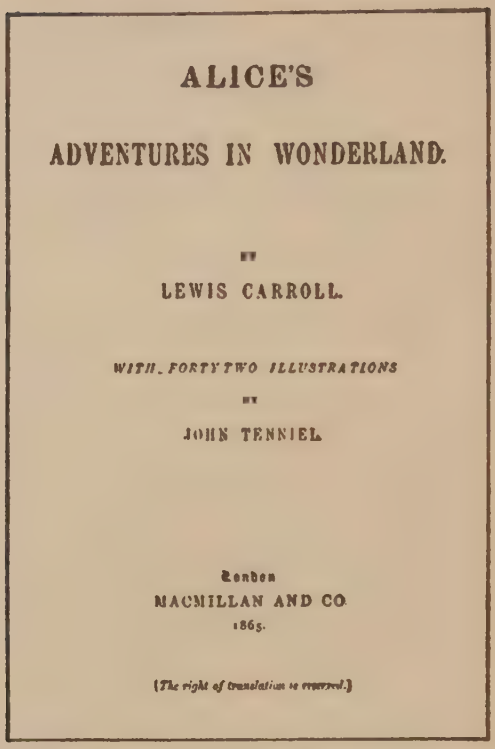
III

What would his emotion be—annoyance, diffidence, or simple compassion—could Lewis Carroll know that today the early editions of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* are among the most eagerly sought of books? The two first editions, of course, outrank the rest in desirability. The plural is used advisedly and deliberately, because *Alice* is almost unique among collected books in that its first edition enjoys a dual personality that is not a question of "issues." In absolute strictness, of course, there was actually a single first edition, but examples of it are so utterly unobtainable that by common consent they are

regarded as virtually non-existent except by the fortunate handful of institutions and individuals who own them. Collector and bookseller join hands to perpetuate this fiction. No subterfuge is involved, no deceit save self-deceit.

The responsibility for this condition (fortunate or unfortunate as one may choose to regard it), whereby scores of otherwise clear-sighted men and women have voluntarily delivered themselves into the hands of the genius of auto-hypnosis, must be laid at Lewis Carroll's own door. Of the 1865 *Alice* two thousand copies were printed—all, apparently, were bound at the same time. Lewis Carroll did not approve of the presswork, and stated his objections so convincingly that the publishers agreed to call in the issue. There is no knowing how many copies were already in private hands—probably not many. The booksellers were willing to surrender their stock. Back came the books, to be redistributed with the publishers' compliments among children's hospitals and workingmen's clubs, and to be read to tatters in a few short months. If the British Museum had only maintained a hospital in one wing it might not lack an 1865 *Alice* today.

Whoever was charged with recalling the edition performed the task so thoroughly that it is to be hoped his services were duly recognized by his employers. His name, if it survived, would be anathema among collectors, and even among booksellers, for while any bookseller is delighted to dispose of a ten-thousand-dollar book, in order to insure any sort of profit on the transaction he must have the ten-thousand-dollar book to dispose of. Perhaps half a dozen copies of the 1865 *Alice* are known to exist; the chance that an additional copy will ever come to light is



ALICE'S

ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND.

BY

LEWIS CARROLL.

WITH FORTY TWO ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

JOHN TENNIEL.

London

MACMILLAN AND CO.

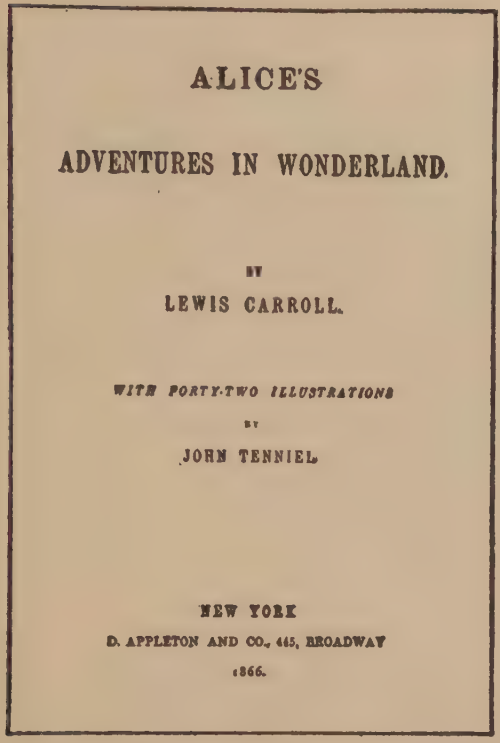
1865.

[The right of translation is reserved.]

The 1865 Alice *was recalled after publication, and only a few copies survive*

excessively remote. The prevalence of the book compared, say, to that of the First Folio Shakespeare is as the prevalence of radium to that of platinum.

But if the bookseller may never hope to be able to offer an absolute and unqualified first edition of *Alice*, he is occasionally able to catalogue something almost as good and not nearly so expensive. Not all of the two thousand copies of the 1865 edition went out to the home trade; a good proportion remained in the publishers' stockroom. Seven hundred and fifty of these were sent to America


ALICE'S

ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND.

BY

LEWIS CARROLL.

WITH FORTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

JOHN TENNIEL.

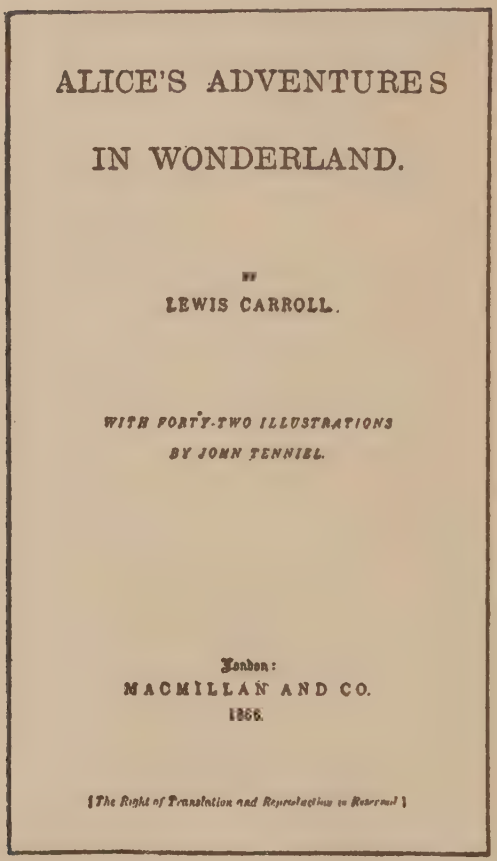
NEW YORK

D. APPLETON AND CO., 445, BROADWAY

1866.

The sheets of the original Alice, *with a New York title page inserted, were sent to America*

supplied with a tipped-in title page bearing the sponsoring name of D. Appleton and Company and the date of 1866. Copies so treated are much rarer than the 1866 London edition, but do not, of course, begin to approximate in rarity the 1865 London edition. They have this advantage over the 1866 London issue, that, save for the inserted title page, they are actually the first edition of the book, whereas the 1866 London edition is a different book altogether, the type having been entirely reset and each signature consisting of four instead of eight leaves.



ALICE'S ADVENTURES

IN WONDERLAND.

BY

LEWIS CARROLL.

WITH FORTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS
BY JOHN TENNIEL.

London:
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1866.

[The Right of Translation and Reproduction is Reserved.]

The London Alice *of 1866 is widely accepted as the first edition, though actually the second*

Do the gorges of all good American patriots rise at the thought of seven hundred and fifty copies of a British book condemned by the author for mechanical imperfections being insolently bundled off to New York as good enough for the uncouth Yankee? A word in extenuation is due the publishers. They undoubtedly disagreed with

Alice and three famous characters who did not appear in the Under Ground *version. From the illustration by Tenniel*

Lewis Carroll's strictures on the reproductions of the Tenniel illustrations and the clearness of the text, but having pledged themselves to withdraw the issue they could hardly continue to pass out copies under his very nose. An inspection of a few copies of the Appleton issue indicates that the author was somewhat hypercritical. This raises another question: Were the Appleton copies sent to America with his knowledge or without it? If with his knowledge, then with his sanction—and patriotic America may transfer its indignation from the publisher to the author.

The reborn *Alice* appeared in London with an 1866 title page. It was, as has been remarked, a brand-new book. Yet it is this issue which enjoys the virtually universal designation of first edition. It is as clearly a second edition as—well, as the 1904 issue of Part I of Thomas Hardy's

In the Under Ground *version the white rabbit carried "a pair of white kid gloves in one hand, and a nosegay in the other," as in this drawing by Lewis Carroll accompanying the manuscript*

The Dynasts, which, every bookseller and every collector knows, is the second edition of a book that first appeared in 1903. The 1866 London *Alice* is almost invariably listed in booksellers' and auction-house catalogues with one of several qualifying phrases—"first published edition," "first accepted edition" (or, more properly, "accepted first edition"), "first edition as generally catalogued." The two latter designations are accurate, the first is a misstatement. The 1865 edition was *published* as literally and unequivocally as any book ever was. What's published may be withdrawn, but it can hardly be unpublished. The whole provocative history of the three earliest *Alices* is set forth at length in Sidney Herbert Williams's bibliography of Lewis Carroll—it is worth noting that Mr. Williams himself would designate the 1865 issue the first issue of the first edition, the 1866 New

In Wonderland *a fan was substituted for the nosegay. Tenniel also showed the rabbit retreating instead of advancing*

York issue the second issue of the first edition, and the 1866 London issue the second edition.

The 1866 London issue—the accepted first edition—is costly enough as it is, regardless of the complications raised by its real lack of priority. There exists scarcely another collectible book in determining the value of which the element of condition is so weighty a factor. The reason is that while collectors of *Alice* are exclusively grown-ups, its readers have always been mostly children. Boys will

The expulsion of the rabbit, according to Lewis Carroll, who made Alice left-handed

be boys, and girls, despite Lewis Carroll's frank favoritism, will always be no better than boys when the ductile strength of a book hinge, the ultimate degree of strain to which a binding thread can be subjected, and the smudgeability of print paper are concerned. Not often is an 1866 *Alice* catalogued as a "fine copy," and what is fine for an *Alice* might be only fair for such a book as Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Renascence*. And between a fair and a pristine copy of *Alice* the price difference may be as between a hundred dollars and a thousand. The fine binding trade has flourished for two generations as a consequence of the rapacity of little girls and boys entrusted, all unknowingly, with first editions of *Alice*, and copies of the book in full levant are rather commoner than copies in the far more desirable full and original cloth.

The English publishers of *Alice* themselves brought out French, German and Italian translations under the re-

In the Tenniel version of the same incident Alice used her right hand

spective titles and dates: *Aventures d'Alice au Pays des Merveilles* (1869, blue cloth), *Alice's Abenteuer im Wunderland* (1869, green cloth), and *Le Avventure d'Alice nel Paese delle Meraviglie* (1872, orange cloth). Lewis Carroll remained Lewis Carroll on the title page of each translation; John Tenniel was still John Tenniel in the French and German versions, but became Giovanni Tenniel in the Italian.

IV

Alice in either her 1865 or her 1866 dress may be out of the reach of most people who would like to own copies, but *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, which is still easily within the means of the average collector, is in one

Alice and the caterpillar, according to Lewis Carroll, who believed in straight pipe stems and rich black smoke

sense a more intimate possession than either of the other two. It is a faithful but slightly reduced photographic facsimile of the original manuscript, the only alteration being in the last page, from which the photograph of Alice Liddell that the author and photographer pasted there was temporarily removed, as too intimate a touch, and the final line rewritten—or rather reprinted. For the whole manuscript was printed in legible Carollian italic —a tremendous task, unquestionably, and pleasant testimony to the author's devotion to the "dear child" who has become the very genius of all childhood. Testimony, too, perhaps, to the author's own good opinion of the tale told on the banks of the Cherwell on a hot July afternoon.

Twenty-four years after the first telling of the *Alice*

Alice and the Caterpillar (this time with a big, big C) according to Tenniel, who saw the decorative possibilities of the hookah tube

story, when Lewis Carroll requested of the Alice Pleasance Liddell of an elder day permission to borrow the manuscript for the facsimile edition, he addressed her as "Dear Mrs. Hargreaves." He proved a faithful custodian of the document: "I am having all the photographs taken in my own studio, so that no one touches the MS. book except myself. By this method I hope to be able to return it to you in as good a condition as when you so kindly lent it me—or even better, if you will allow me to have it rebound before returning it: May I?" Mrs.

Father William's demonstration of a prerogative of old age—the Lewis Carroll version

Hargreaves fortunately said he might not. The manuscript still rests in the original morocco covers—a little shabby, a little worn, for it was Alice's well-loved and well-thumbed book.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland is about two and a half times as long as *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, and the four chapters into which the original manuscript was divided become twelve in the expanded book. The opening pages of each are identical save for minor changes. The most interesting early alteration comes with the return of the White Rabbit, "splendidly dressed, with a pair of white kid gloves in one hand, and a nosegay in the other." When he fled at the sound of her voice "Alice took up the nosegay and gloves, and found the nosegay so delicious that she kept smelling at it all the time she went on talking to herself." In the lengthened version the Rabbit has "a pair of white kid-gloves in one hand and a large fan in the other; when he scurried away "Alice

Tenniel used the same composition but transferred the locale to out of doors

took up the fan and gloves, and, as the hall was very hot, she kept fanning herself all the time she went on talking."

The first important addition to the text is the Caucus-race in Chapter III of *Wonderland*. The mouse offers an entirely different "long and sad tale" in *Wonderland*—the familiar *Wonderland* substitute, as every reader of *Alice* will recall, is set in types of diminishing sizes and in a form approximating as nearly as possible the mouse-tail eccentricities of the manuscript version. The Father William verses in parody of Southey exhibit a few differences; the ointment which enabled the remarkable old gentleman to keep all his limbs very supple costs "five shillings the box" in *Under Ground;* in *Wonderland* the price has been cut to a shilling. To the end of Chapter V of *Wonderland* and Chapter III of *Under Ground* the

Father William as a gourmet, according to Lewis Carroll, who introduced a cook

additions total only a few hundred words; at this point *Under Ground* is seven-tenths complete and *Wonderland* less than one-fifth.

An interpolation of paramount importance comes with Chapters VI and VII of *Wonderland*, which introduce the Duchess, the Cheshire-Cat, the March Hare, the Dormouse, the Hatter, and the best known tea party in history. Without this inspired quintette *Alice* would hardly be *Alice;* the world must be grateful that Lewis Carroll did not dash off to a publisher as soon as he had got his original story on paper. The word-play between the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon is greatly amplified in *Wonderland;* in *Under Ground* the Mock Turtle sings a song which does not appear in *Wonderland*, the Gryphon joining in the chorus:

> Beneath the waters *of* the sea
> Are lobsters thick as thick can be—
> They love to dance with you and me,
> My own, my gentle Salmon!

Tenniel omitted the cook—his most radical departure from the Carrollian sketches

Salmon come up! Salmon go down!
Salmon come twist your tail around!
Of all the fishes *of* the sea
There's none so good as Salmon!

The *Wonderland* substitute for this is " 'Will you walk a little faster?' said a whiting to a snail." The verses which in *Wonderland* begin

'Tis the voice of the Lobster: I heard him declare
"You have baked me too brown, I must sugar my hair"

are not in *Under Ground;* the *Beautiful Soup* song of *Under Ground* is expanded from one to two stanzas in *Wonderland.* The trial of the Knave of Hearts occupies little more than three pages of *Under Ground* and nearly thirty

of *Wonderland*, owing principally to the reappearance of the March Hare, the Dormouse and the Hatter and the evidence of Alice herself. It should not be necessary to point out that the Jabberwock, the Walrus and the Carpenter, Tweedledum and Tweedledee and many other familiar Carrollian conceits have no existence in either the *Under Ground* or the *Wonderland* stories, but make their first and last appearances in *Through the Looking Glass*. These two stories in one are now generally available, as they should be, in a single volume.

Lewis Carroll would have been the first to admit that he was no draughtsman, and anyone owning a rudimentary acquaintance with draughtsmanship would be second. But he was perfectly aware of the picture in his head—of what he would have liked to draw if he had known how—and John Tenniel wisely availed himself of the author's conceptions. Lewis Carroll had adorned his manuscript version with thirty-seven drawings; Tenniel provided forty-two for *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and twenty of these are finely-executed duplicates of Lewis Carroll originals that adhere to his composition and detail with accuracy and fidelity.

V

It is a pleasant coincidence that the two most famous trios of little girls in literature in English should each have numbered an Alice and an Edith and a third member whose name ended in A, and that the surname of each group should have begun with L. There were three little Misses Liddell and there were three little Misses Longfellow:

Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,
And Edith with golden hair.

The coincidence may serve as an excuse to recall the fact that Lewis Carroll was one of the considerable army of burlesquers who had sprung to their pens with the appearance of *The Song of Hiawatha*. His *Hiawatha's Photographing*, written in the familiar metre, had the advantage of being funny, a characteristic which it shared with few of the host of parodies. It was introduced with the following bracketed author's note:

In an age of imitation, I can claim no special merit for this slight attempt at doing what is known to be so easy. Any fairly practised writer, with the slightest ear for rhythm, could compose, for hours together, in the easy running metre of 'The Song of Hiawatha.' Having, then, distinctly stated that I challenge no attention in the following little poem to its merely verbal jingle, I must beg the candid reader to confine his criticism to its treatment of the subject.

When *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* was published in 1886, the foreword declared that no praise for the expanded *Alice* "has ever given me one hundredth part of the pleasure it has been to think of the sick children in hospitals (where it has been a delight to me to send copies) forgetting, for a few bright hours, their pain and weariness—perhaps thinking lovingly of the unknown writer of the tale—perhaps even putting up a childish prayer (and oh, how much it needs!) for one who can but dimly hope to stand, some day, not quite out of sight of those pure young faces, before the great white throne. 'I am very sure,' writes a lady-visitor at a Home for Sick Children, 'that there will be many loving earnest prayers

for you on Easter morning from the children.' " The lady-visitor, who is quoted at some length, told, among other things, of a little sufferer "who said to his mother 'when I am in bed, I put out my hand to see if I can feel Jesus and my angel. I thought perhaps *in the dark* they'd touch me, but they never have yet.' " A postscript to this foreword announces that "the profits, if any, of this book will be given to Children's Hospitals and Convalescent Homes for Sick Children." Following the announcement comes this charming

P.P.S.—The thought, so prettily expressed by the little boy, is also to be found in Longfellow's "Hiawatha," where he appeals to those who believe

> "That the feeble hands and helpless,
> Groping blindly in the darkness,
> Touch God's right hand in that darkness,
> And are lifted up and strengthened."

Another pleasant coincidence—with perhaps a hint of graceful apology to the memory of the author of *The Song of Hiawatha* from the author of *Hiawatha's Photographing*.

WASHINGTON IRVING AND *THE SKETCH BOOK*

I

ONLY when the *Half Moon* had reached a point not far beyond the site of the present city of Albany did Henry Hudson conclude that the broad, calm stream up which he had been sailing for a month was not the direct road to China—at least for ships of eighty tons burden. The discovery was something of a disappointment, but the disappointment was not so physically distressing as that which he had encountered on two previous voyages. This lovely valley was a delightful contrast to the bleakness of Greenland and Spitzbergen, and his stars had brought him here at the ideal season to read its beauties—the end of summer and the beginning of autumn. Latter-day travelers have been denied the privilege of seeing the river that bears his name under quite such fair auspices. In 1609 no one had yet thought of ripping the Palisades apart as a convenient supply of road material, no gray cell-block stood out against the wooded bluffs at the head of the Tappan Zee, and the lower stretches were not churned by a single river steamer misnamed after the discoverer.

Not quite two hundred years passed before the American to whom the Hudson owes as much as to the gallant Englishman made his first voyage up the river with the

far more prosaic aim of visiting a married sister. He was seventeen years old, having been born in little and still rather new New York just five months before the signing of the definitive treaty of peace that set the American colonies formally before the world as free and independent States. George Washington was already first in the hearts of his countrymen, and the eleventh and last child of William and Sarah Irving was almost inevitably christened Washington.

The New York into which Washington Irving was born—on William Street, now a short and gloomy alley but an important adjunct of Wall Street only a few yards away—was a metropolis of some twenty-three thousand souls. If the Woolworth Building had existed at the moment it would have been regarded as away up town; if Greenwich Village had dared call itself a village the designation would have been regarded as chamber-of-commerceism gone berserk; the Bowery was the most rural of turnpikes, with not a single dime flophouse in all its grassy, dusty length.

For all this there was a cosmopolitanism about the place that was perhaps more genuine if less strident than can be found in the New York of today. At all events, here Washington Irving grew up, graced with a slender formal education but endowed with the virtues that accrue from omnivorous reading sanely absorbed. The most sensible Englishmen were losing their heads one way or the other, or both ways at once, over the kaleidoscopic series of phenomena that have been grouped under the title of the French Revolution; it was a time that called for hurrahs or curses, not for faint praise or faint damns; the civilized world had gone crazy save for the remnant of literate folk

on the Atlantic Coast and in the hinterland. There are many cultured, and many more uncultured, Europeans who have never yet quite absorbed this fact. The component parts of Europe flew at each other's throats for a quarter century while America was practising the arts of peace with some success—infinitely more success, at least, than Europe. The cuspidor era which evoked the scorn

NEW YORK: VERY LITTLE AND RATHER OLD

From the first engraved view of Nieuw Amsterdam, published in Adriaen Van der Donck's account (Amsterdam, 1651)

of Charles Dickens was still two generations away. The new United States was off to a flying start while Europe was deciding on the most spectacular method of suicide. It was in this agreeable era that Washington Irving grew up; some of it he saw and all of it, in his placid, kindly, urbane fashion, he was.

He made his first visit to Europe in 1804, chiefly on account of his health (his older and more prosperous

brothers made the trip possible). His ills were far from psychological; the skipper of the vessel that bore him expected to drop him overboard in midocean. The joke was on the captain; Irving landed at Bordeaux late in June, 1804, the better for his six-weeks' voyage. Bonaparte had abolished the French Republic the day before Irving sailed; six months later a pope would come to Paris to re-enact the coronation of Charlemagne and recreate the Holy Roman Empire.

Early in 1806 Irving was back in New York. He had a share in an amusing periodical enterprise called *Salmagundi*, was admitted to the bar, exhibited a just more than casual interest in the affairs of the day, and, in 1809, completed and published *A History of New York, by Diedrich Knickerbocker*. The book was most skilfully and cleverly press-agented in the city that became the world's capital of press-agentry. It was an instant if confusing success. Among the ancient families whose exploits (or whose names at least) were set forth in that redoubtable chronicle were "the Van Winkles, of Haerlem, potent suckers of eggs, and noted for running of horses, and running up of scores at taverns."

II

For a successful author (and his *History* made him that) Irving during the next few years remained singularly inactive. Toward the close of the War of 1812 he became aide and military secretary to Governor Tompkins of New York and won the right to be known as Colonel Irving, but he appears never to have worked at his rank. A little later he planned to go to Washington and apply

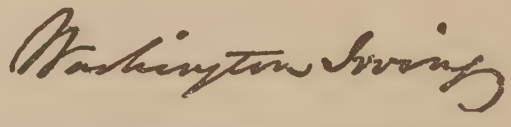
for an army commission, but peace intervened. A few weeks later, in May, 1815, he sailed for England.

He arrived to find Waterloo a part of history and a definitely fallen Napoleon awaiting the pleasure of the victorious allies. He spent the next three years leading the desultory sort of life that only Irving could live; the outstanding note in this era is his friendship with Scott. It began in the summer of 1817 with Irving's presenting a letter of introduction at the gate of Abbotsford "with a card and request to know whether it would be possible for him to receive a visit from me in the course of the day. Mr. Scott himself came out to see me and welcomed me to his home with the genuine hospitality of the olden-times. In a moment I found myself at his breakfast table, and felt as if I was at the social board of an old friend. Instead of a visit of a few hours I was kept there several days—and such days!"

Pictures like this present the inevitable impression of a moneyed and leisurely Bohemian gentleman touring the world at his ease and taking no thought for the morrow because thought is a bore and provision for the future needless. On the contrary, Irving was a poor man at the mercy of kindly and admiring relatives—and he was too much a man to enjoy the situation. He was thirty-four years old; it was high time he was about something, and no one appreciated the need more than Irving himself. By the summer of 1817 he had probably made at least a tentative decision to become an author. Why not? He had been an author before.

On March 3, 1819, he wrote from London to his friend Henry Brevoort in New York: "I have just sent to my brother Ebenezer Mss: for the first number of a work

which if successful I hope to continue occasionally. I had wished him to send it to [Moses] Thomas for publication; but I now must have it published by some one else. Will you, as you are a literary man and a man of leisure, take it under your care? I wish the copyright secured for me, and the work printed, and then sold to one or more book-sellers, who will take the whole impression at a fair discount & give cash or good notes for it. This makes short work of it and is more profitable to the author than selling the copyright. I should like Thomas to have the first offer —as he has been and is a true friend to me & I wish him to have any advantage that may arise from the publication of it. If the work is printed in N York will you correct the proof sheets, as I fear the Mss: will be obscure & occasionally incorrect, & you are well acquainted with my handwriting."



The entire Irving-Brevoort correspondence for this period must be read in order to get the whole picture. It is a singularly complete picture—one of the most detailed and minute in the history of publishing. Fortunately all but a few of the letters are available; they have been competently edited by George S. Hellman (New York, 1915 and 1916), and they must inevitably be consulted by anyone who seeks the full story. Further quotation from Irving's letter of March 3, 1819, is necessary for an understanding of his conception of the work which he was undertaking: "I feel great diffidence about this reappearance in literature. I am conscious of my imperfections—

and my mind has been for a long time past so preyed upon and agitated by various cares and anxieties, that I fear it has lost much of its cheerfulness and some of its activity. I have attempted no lofty theme nor sought to look wise and learned, which appears to be very much the fashion among our American writers at present. I have preferred addressing myself to the feeling & fancy of the reader, more than to his judgment. My writings may appear therefore light & trifling in our country of philosophers & politicians—but if they possess merit in the class of literature to which they belong it is all to which I aspire in the work. I seek only to blow a flute of accompaniment in the national concert, and leave others to play the fiddle & French horn." The flute was selected for this metaphor because Irving was himself an adept at it.

The second part of the new work went forward on April 1st, the third on May 13th. Irving had had no word from Brevoort in the interval, which was, of course, no fault of that indefatigable, successful and feeless author's agent, but rather of the inventor of the turbine engine for not being born earlier. "I am extremely anxious to hear from you what you think of the first number," Irving declared, "and am looking anxiously for the arrival of the next ship from New York. My fate hangs on it, for I am now at the end of my *fortune*."

III

The first number of *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* appeared in May, 1919. At the foot of the title-page was the name of C. S. Van Winkle, printer. Two thousand copies were issued, to sell at seventy-five

cents each. The pamphlet was received with a chorus of approbation, though even its most enthusiastic admirers could not realize that they were hailing the first piece of indigenous writing (the same author's *History of New York* aside for the moment) that was to endure as literature and not as a piece of Americana. The authorship of the new work was hardly recondite—nothing like the gay secret that Diedrich Knickerbocker had been. The New York *Evening Post* had this to say about Part I in its issue of June 26, 1819:

> The grace of style; the rich, warm tone of benevolent feeling; the freely-flowing vein of hearty and happy humor, and the fine-eyed spirit of observation, sustained by an enlightened understanding and regulated by a perception of fitness—a tact—wonderfully quick and sure, for which Mr. Irving has been heretofore so much distinguished, are all exhibited anew in the Sketch Book, with freshened beauty and added charms. There are few pieces of composition in the language, of similar design, equal to the account of Roscoe: It is a just and noble-spirited eulogium, united with a well discriminated, rapid, sketchy delineation of the character of that elegant historian that does equal honor to the subject and the writer. "The Wife" is beautifully pathetic, and in these times of commercial disaster will be read with interest, and, it is to be hoped, with *benefit* by many. But "Rip Van Winkle" is the masterpiece. For that comic spirit which is without any infusion of gall, which delights in what is ludicrous (for its laughter is not mixed with contempt), which seeks its gratification in the eccentricities of a simple, unrefined state of society, rather than in the vicious follies of artificial life, for the vividness and truth with which Rip's character is drawn, and the state of society in the village where he lived is depicted; and for the graceful ease with which it is told the story of "Rip Van Winkle" has few competitors. There appears, also, to be a design to exhibit the contrast between the old provincial times and the state of things subsequent to the American Revolution.

THE

SKETCH BOOK

OF

GEOFFREY CRAYON, Gent.

No. I.

"I have no wife nor children, good or bad, to provide for. A mere spectator of other men's fortunes and adventures, and how they play their parts, which methinks are diversely presented unto me, as from a common theatre or scene."

BURTON.

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY C. S. VAN WINKLE,

101 Greenwich Street.

.....

1819.

TITLE PAGE OF PART I

Containing Rip Van Winkle. *The final part (VII) was issued sixteen months later*

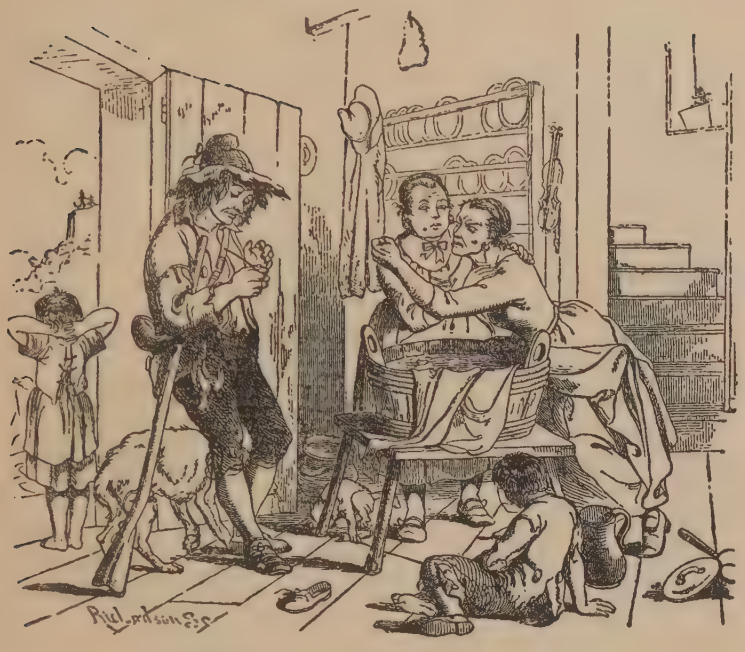
"'Rip Van Winkle' is the masterpiece," and "Rip Van Winkle" has, of course, remained the masterpiece. *The Sketch Book,* as Charles Dudley Warner has said, "is only floated, as an original work, by two papers, the 'Rip Van Winkle' and the 'Legend of Sleepy Hollow'; that is to

say by the use of the Dutch material, and the elaboration of the 'Knickerbocker Legend,' which was the great achievement of Irving's life."

This undeniably sound conclusion should be borne in mind in reading the "Prospectus" which appeared at the front of Part I of *The Sketch Book* and which has not customarily been included in subsequent editions:

> The following writings are published on experiment; should they please, they may be followed by others. The writer will have to contend with some disadvantages. He is unsettled in his abode, subject to interruptions, and has his share of cares and vicissitudes. He cannot, therefore, promise a regular plan, nor regular periods of publication. Should he be encouraged to proceed, much time may elapse between the appearance of his numbers; and their size will depend on the materials he may have on hand. His writings will partake of the fluctuations of his own thoughts and feelings; sometimes treating of scenes before him, sometimes of others purely imaginary, and sometimes wandering back with his recollections to his native country. He will not be able to give them that tranquil attention necessary to finished composition; and as they must be transmitted across the Atlantic for publication, he will have to trust to others to correct the frequent errors of the press. Should his writings, however, with all their imperfections, be well received, he cannot conceal that it would be a source of the purest gratification; for though he does not aspire to those high honours which are the rewards of loftier intellects; yet it is the dearest wish of his heart to have a secure and cherished, though humble corner in the good opinions and kind feelings of his countrymen.

Irving was at his best with the scenes of the homeland; "the dearest wish of his heart" was the approval of the home audience; is there any doubt that he was homesick?



HOME LIFE OF THE VAN WINKLES

From the drawing by F. O. C. Darley, the first illustrator of The Sketch Book

In a notebook which bears on its cover the words "1817 Notes while preparing Sketch Book" appears this jotting: "The lazy luxury of a summer day in the country—to lie in a bed of clover with a book & look down on the Hudson. Sloops with sails flapping against the mast." What could all the rivers of England, all the rivers of Europe, all the rivers of Paradise offer to compensate for that picture?

Despite Irving's failure to promise "a regular plan" or "regular periods of publication," there was considerable regularity both in the writing and the publication of the parts. Part VII and last was published September 13,

THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE
From the drawing by Darley

1820, sixteen months after Part I. It was in Part VI that "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" appeared.

The Irving-Brevoort correspondence is of immense importance bibliographically. Irving sent detailed instructions regarding corrections throughout the period of publication, and Brevoort described alterations made at his own end independent of Irving's findings. The situation was vastly complicated by the time required for interchanges of letters. The resulting puzzle has never been wholly resolved, though it is far from incapable of being resolved. *The Sketch Book* still awaits the hand of the

definitive bibliographer. *Pickwick* has been explored from end to end, but there are thousands of men and women who know the story of Rip Van Winkle by heart who have never heard of Sam Weller. It is tolerably common knowledge among book collecters that in a first edition of *The Sketch Book* the first five numbers should have continuous pagination and the two final numbers separate pagination in each part, but the problem goes far deeper than that.

The American edition of *The Sketch Book* is easily the most distinguished work ever issued in America in parts. In such state it is today excessively rare in complete form. Copies rebound and with the edges trimmed are scarce enough, and odd copies of the parts have a high collection value based on the human hope that complete sets may be made up with patience.

IV

The early numbers of *The Sketch Book* were greeted in Great Britain with hearty approval and with implied or frankly expressed wonder that they should have seen the light of day in New York rather than in London—Americans, it appeared, not only spoke English but wrote it; there may have been consolation in the fact that the whole work was written in England. William Godwin, publisher, radical, father-in-law of Percy Bysshe Shelley and no man to lend money to, wrote to James Ogilvie: "Everywhere I find in it the marks of a mind of the utmost elegance and refinement, a thing as you know that I was not exactly prepared to look for in an American." There were elements of the periodical press, however,

who rejoiced that the work was American; there was nothing in heaven or earth that could prevent them from reprinting as much of it as they chose. This fact, and the bruited likelihood of a supreme bit of banditry in the republication of the entire work (or as much of it as was available), were among the influences that directed Irving's endeavors in the search, soon undertaken, for a London publisher. Another influence was the simple human desire to see his name (or that of Geoffrey Crayon) above a London imprint, and the equally human desire to have for himself any profit that might result from republication rather than to see it vanish without protest down the pockets of the pirates.

Irving broached the matter to John Murray, the second of that name, successful publisher of successful poet, George Gordon, Sixth Baron Byron. Murray, on October 27, 1819, wrote Irving thus:

> I entreat you to believe that I feel truly obliged by your kind intentions towards me, and that I entertain the most unfeigned respect for your tasteful talents. My house is completely filled with workpeople at this time, and I have only an office to transact business in, and yesterday I was wholly occupied or I should have done myself the pleasure of seeing you. If it would not suit me to engage in the publication of your present work, it is only because I do not see that scope in the nature of it which would enable me to make those satisfactory accounts between us, without which I really feel no satisfaction in undertaking to publish for you; but I will do all that I can to promote their circulation, and shall be most ready to attend to any future plan of yours.

Was ever declination more graciously conveyed? But the refusal was as firm as it was gracious. Within three months Irving had concluded an agreement with John

Miller to bring out the first four numbers of *The Sketch Book* in a single volume, Irving to bear the entire expense and risk. Miller printed a thousand copies; the book started to sell. Then Miller, no fault of *The Sketch Book*, failed.

At this juncture, by a fortunate coincidence, Walter Scott made a visit to London for the purpose of becoming Sir Walter. During his stay he waited upon Murray and prevailed upon him to take over *The Sketch Book*. It speaks finely for Scott's admiration, or for Murray's openness to conviction, or for both, that Scott succeeded. So did *The Sketch Book*. By midsummer of 1820 the Miller edition, which Murray took over, was sold out, and a second volume, comprising the three final numbers as published at home (plus "Traits of Indian Character" and "Philip of Pokanoket," which did not appear in the first American edition but have always been included in subsequent editions of *The Sketch Book*), was "going off briskly." Murray had paid two hundred pounds for the rights to the book; with its success he handsomely advanced another hundred guineas; with its continued success came another voluntary offering of one hundred pounds. No wonder Murray was known as the Prince of Publishers.

By the middle of 1822 Irving was able to write to Brevoort that he was enjoying "ready access to all kinds of society." He found "a strong disposition to be pleased with any thing American just now, among the better classes of England; and a great curiosity awakened respecting our literature &c. Among other interesting acquaintances that I have made is Mrs. Siddons. She is now near seventy and yet a magnificent looking woman. It is surprising how little time has been able to impair the dig-

nity of her carriage or the noble expression of her countenance." Neither, apparently, had it impaired her tragic manner. When Irving was presented to her she exclaimed: "You've made me weep!" Irving was so abashed at the sudden compliment that he was barely able to say anything, let alone make the obvious reply which the praise demanded and which was, perhaps, invited. When, a little later, shortly after Murray had brought out Irving's *Bracebridge Hall*, paying him a thousand guineas for it, Irving and Mrs. Siddons met once more under somewhat similar circumstances. "You've made we weep again," declared the great tragedienne, and this time Geoffrey Crayon was not to be caught napping. He alluded gracefully to the old lady's own prowess as a stimulus to the tear ducts, and all was well.

V

Irving returned to New York in 1832 to find that his long absence had not lost him the regard of his countrymen. But he was ever as shy in great companies as he was at home in small, and the adulation of the metropolis held no allure—or at least insufficient allure to keep him in the city. Some twenty miles up the Hudson, as far from the madding crowd as Albany is today, for all practical purposes, he built Sunnyside. Fifteen years later progress intruded in the form of a diabolical contrivance called the railroad. Irving was distressed, for Sunnyside was nearly at the water's edge, and the railroad wanted nothing less than the water's edge for itself. Protesting whimsically that he thought the world was already finished, Irving none the less graciously received the potentates who

JOSEPH JEFFERSON AS RIP VAN WINKLE

From photographs by Sarony

sought to cross his land and left to their discretion the amount of damages. The incident is trivial but, like most trivia, illuminating.

Two years later he gave voice to a legitimate protest. Writing to his friend Gouverneur Kemble, a director of the railroad company, he described his "terrible state of shattered nerves; having been startled out of my first sleep at midnight, on Saturday night last, by the infernal alarum of your railroad steam trumpet. It left me in a deplorable state of nervous agitation for upward of an hour. I remained sleepless until daybreak, and miserable all the following day."

Irving had infinitely less temperament than most practicioners of the arts, rather less than the average tough-skinned business man of that day or this; he was the personification of urbane good nature. His account of the torture inflicted on him by "the infernal alarum of your railroad steam trumpet" is apparently unique in the chronicle of his experiences; his recital of the incident is an admirable tribute to the lustiness of the whistle of the paleozoic locomotive.

Thousands of commuters now pass Sunnyside twice a day, Sundays, holidays, and annual two-weeks' vacations excepted, and the easy glide of electric locomotives that have no occasion to whistle within miles of Sunnyside disturbs the calm of Irvington less today than did the clattering roar of their wood-burning forebears. The Tappan Zee looks much the same as it did in his day; Piermont and Nyack on the western shore dot the slopes more extensively, but the northwest wind still whips the lake-like expanse into a miniature ocean, and breathless midsummers still find it as unruffled as the spirit of Irving

himself. For even as the Hudson inspired the best in Irving, so today does its calm placidity perfectly reflect the soul of the man who found it a source of manufactured traditions which, in a less civilized era, would have come down through the years as a definite folklore.

VI

A few months before Irving's death in 1859 he attended in New York a performance of Thomas Holcroft's *The Road to Ruin* in which the part of Goldfinch was taken by Joseph Jefferson, third of that name, then in his thirtieth year. Irving noted in the young actor a striking resemblance to the latter's father, and the son, coming upon the reference in Irving's published letters, was duly flattered at the notice which his performance had evoked. "I put down the book," Jefferson records in his autobiography, "and lay there thinking how proud I was, and ought to be, at the revelation of this compliment. . . . And so I thought to myself, 'Washington Irving, the author of *The Sketch Book*, in which is the quaint story of Rip Van Winkle.' Rip Van Winkle! There was to me magic in the sound of the name as I repeated it. Why, was not this the very character I wanted? An American story by an American author was surely just the theme suited to an American actor."

At least four different dramatic versions had already been made—the elder Jefferson himself had acted in one. The original stage Rip had been James Henry Hackett, whose son, the late James K. Hackett, gave George S. Hellman from memory the substance of a letter which Irving had written his father and which Mr. Hellman re-

produces in *Washington Irving Esquire* (New York, 1925): "My dear Hackett: I am astounded and surprised and amazed that you could have made such a wonderful play out of such scanty material as my sketch of Rip Van Winkle," and the younger Hackett added: "He also said that my father was, to his mind, the embodiment of the character which he drew."

None of the earlier dramatic versions of the story seemed satisfactory to Jefferson, and he set to work on one of his own, but even this, on production, was not wholly to his liking. Jefferson had strong faith in the idea, however, and five years later, in 1865, when he went to London on a professional tour he submitted the script to the great Dion Boucicault for revision. The amended version was offered to the London public on September 5th, and was an immediate success. Jefferson's memory today is chiefly identified with his characterization of Rip. On one occasion he took the play to the village of Catskill itself, and at a reception following the performance a nervous master of ceremonies introduced him as "Mr. Washington Irving." Irving would have appreciated the situation and felt honored in the transposition. For although Rip slept twenty years, when at last he awakened it was to an immortality that carries with it the name not only of his creator but also that of his foremost interpreter.

SAMUEL PEPYS AND HIS *DIARY*

I

ON April 12, 1667, Samuel Pepys, Clerk of the Acts of the Navy, entered his home in Seething Lane, London, without being put to the trouble of lifting the latch. Far from being grateful for this minor convenience, Mr. Pepys was seriously annoyed—doors were made to be closed, not to be left open. It was an oversight on the part of Luce, the Pepys maid, and in his vexation at her negligence Mr. Pepys "did give her a kick in our entry, and offered a blow at her"—the kick, one infers, was powerful enough to put Luce beyond reach of the blow. So far so good, for Luce does not appear to have been incapacitated by the attack and presumably closed doors thereafter. But Mr. Pepys, who should have felt humanly relieved by his outburst, discovered an added annoyance in the fact that his action had come under the eye of Sir William Penn's footboy (Penn, father of the founder of Pennsylvania, was his next-door neighbor), "which did vex me to the heart, because I know he will be telling their family of it."

So far as the world knows, Sir William's anonymous footboy went to his grave without divulging the story of the scandalous exhibition of temper in the adjacent entry which it had been his joyful privilege to witness. Luce seems to have held her tongue; so, apparently, if her hus-

band informed her of the incident, did Mistress Pepys. A year later the secret must have looked safe—and no less safe a century later, a century and a half. Then, one hundred and fifty-eight years after the event, it leaked out—or rather burst out as one inconsequential drop in the incredible torrent of self-disclosure that is the diary of Samuel Pepys.

Did Pepys intend it so? The question has been answered variously and inconclusively. It is one of two engrossing points about Pepys—one may almost say it is one of the only two points about Pepys—which his diary does not reveal. Of which more later.

Samuel Pepys was a remarkably close approximation to the modern conception of a self-made man. He was born in Cambridgeshire in 1633, two years after Milton had written his sonnet *On His Having Arrived to the Age of Twenty-Three* and sixteen years before the first Charles bent his head over the block with "Remember!" on his lips—the boy Pepys was a spectator at the execution. The elder Pepys was a tailor, which might have meant much or little, but in this instance it meant little—the son certainly inherited a taste for fine clothes, but until well in his manhood as certainly lacked the means of gratifying it. On the death of a brother in 1661 John Pepys came into eighty pounds a year (double the sum that made Goldsmith's village preacher "passing rich"), but the bequest did not come in time to further the education of Samuel. With the aid of scholarships (one of them the foundation of John Smith, the first of that name to contribute to the fame of the diarist) he contrived to take his degree at Cambridge in 1653. In 1655 he married Elizabeth Michel, the fifteen-year-old daughter of a somewhat ec-

centric Frenchman whose economic condition seems to have been slightly more anemic than that of the elder Pepys—the fathers, in fact, must have been a perfect duo of Micawbers.

The Pepys family had a single influential relative, but he was enough. Sir Edward Montagu, John Pepys's first cousin, soon after this rose high in the affairs of the navy —so high that he required a secretary, and chose his second cousin Samuel. This connection, though it became the mainspring of Samuel's success, still left the burden of proving himself on Samuel's own shoulders. Had he thereupon considered his fortune made, the fortune which he had not made would speedily have been unmade. The copy-book fundamentals of industry, application and zeal were solidly implanted in his character; added to these was a high degree of honesty in a day when that attribute was a thing to marvel at in public life. In 1659 Pepys secured a clerkship in the exchequer office—salary fifty pounds a year. And on January 1, 1660 (1659, as the calendar then divided the year), he began his diary:

> Blessed be God, at the end of the last year, I was in very good health, without any sense of my old pain, but upon taking of cold. I lived in Axe Yard, having my wife, and servant Jane, and no other in family than us three.

II

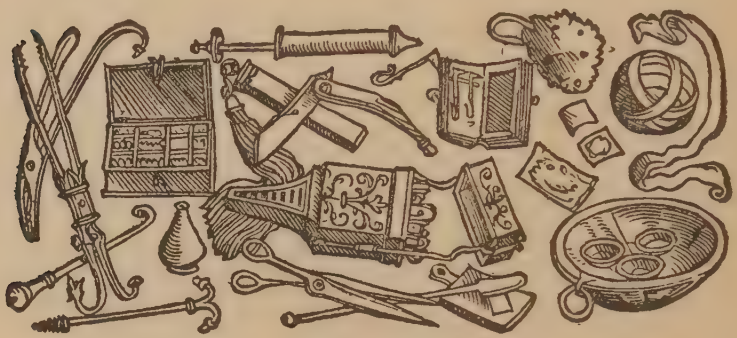
The reason for the disappearance of "my old pain" was that not quite two years before the diary opened Pepys had been "cut for the stone." The operation must have been excruciatingly unpleasant. One inevitably regrets that the event could not have taken place while

the diary was in progress, for succeeding generations would then have had a minute account of it—it could not but have caused him intense agony, but it must have interested him tremendously. Pepys turned each succeeding anniversary into a fête day in honor of this anatomical summit of his career. The very stone was shown to admiring friends and even to other sufferers as a piece of enthusiast's propaganda in favor of operations. His friend and fellow diarist, John Evelyn, knew the story and shared Pepys's faith in the efficacy of the treatment, for under June 10, 1669 (less than two weeks after the final entry in Pepys's own diary), Evelyn wrote in his journal: "I went this evening to London, to carry Mr. Pepys to my Brother Richard, now exceedingly afflicted with the stone, who had been successfully cut, and carried the stone as big as a tennis-ball, to show him and encourage his resolution to go through the operation." Richard Evelyn could not be convinced; he lingered for nine months, dying on March 6, 1670, "a brother," recorded Evelyn on that day, "whom I most dearly loved for his many virtues . . . a sober, prudent, worthy gentleman. . . . His body was opened, and a stone taken out of his bladder, not much bigger than a nutmeg."

The seventh anniversary (1665) of Pepys's operation had fallen on Easter Sunday, and the coincidence apparently moved him to note down a summary of his physical condition:

> This is the day seven years which, by the blessing of God, I have survived of my being cut of the stone, and am now in very perfect good health, and have long been: and though the last winter hath been as hard a winter as any have been these many

years, yet I never was better in my life, nor have not, these ten years, gone colder in the summer than I have done all this winter, wearing only a doublet, and a waistcoat cut open on the back; abroad, a cloak, and within doors a coat I slipped on. Now I am at a loss to know whether it be my hare's foot which is my preservation; for I never had a fit of the colique since I wore it, or whether it be my taking of a pill of turpentine every morning.



PRE-PEPYSIAN SURGICAL APPLIANCES

From J. Charetanus's Wundartznei, *Frankfort, 1531*

For a description of the rigors of Pepys's surgical ordeal the reader may be satisfactorily referred to the paper on Mr. and Mrs. Pepys in Dr. Charles MacLaurin's *Post Mortem* (London, 1922). "It is all very well," he concludes, "for us to laugh at the forthright methods of our ancestors; but, considering their difficulties—no anæsthesia, no antiseptics, want of sufficient surgical practice, and the fact that few could ever have had the hardness of heart necessary to stand the patient's bawlings—it is remarkable that they did so well and that the mortality of this appalling operation seems only to have been from fifteen to twenty percent. Moreover we may be pretty

sure that no small stone would ever be operated upon; men postponed the operation until the discomfort became intolerable." The student cannot but note with regret, however, that "it was always considered the mark of a wise surgeon to carry a spare stone with him in his waistcoat pocket, so that the patient might at least have a product of the chase to see if the surgeon should find his normal efforts unrewarded. Diagnosis was little more advanced in those days than operative surgery; there are numbers of conditions which may have caused symptoms like those of a stone, and it was always well for the surgeon to be prepared."

III

The diary covers ten years lacking seven months of Pepys's life. Begun just before his twenty-seventh birthday, it continues to three months after his thirty-sixth. It concludes on a note of true pathos:

> And so I betake myself to that course, which is almost as much as to see myself go into my grave: for which, and all the discomforts that will accompany my being blind, the good God prepare me!

The discontinuance of the diary, Coleridge declared, "was a greater and more grievous loss to the mind's eye of posterity than to the bodily organs of Pepys himself." Pepys did not go blind; his vision once more became virtually normal, thanks to skilful treatment, but at all events he was frightened away from diary keeping.

When the diary opened its heroine—and Elizabeth Pepys is that if lady in book ever was before or since—

was twenty; she died, aged twenty-nine, less than six months after the diary's conclusion. Pepys survived her nearly thirty-four years—until May 26, 1703, on which date John Evelyn entered this dignified and deserved tribute in his journal:

> This day died Mr. Sam Pepys, a very worthy, industrious, and curious person, none in England exceeding him in knowledge of the Navy, in which he had passed through all the most considerable offices, Clerk of the Acts and Secretary of the Admiralty, all which he performed with great integrity. When King James II went out of England [1688, when Pepys was nearly fifty-six] he laid down his office, and would serve no more, but withdrawing himself from all public affairs, he lived at Clapham with his partner Mr. Hewer, formerly his clerk, in a very noble and sweet place, where he enjoyed the fruits of his labors in great prosperity. He was universally beloved, hospitable, generous, learned in many things, skilled in music, a very great cherisher of learned men of whom he had the conversation.

Pepys's nephew and principal heir, John Jackson, invited Evelyn "to be one to hold up the pall at his magnificent obsequies, but my indisposition hindered me from doing him this last office." Evelyn, then eighty-three, survived Pepys three years.

IV

Of Pepys's will it is essential to mention only a single provision: the bequest of his library to Magdalene College, Cambridge. The library comprised, and still comprises, some three thousand volumes that are typical of the range and vigor of Pepys's alert intellect and his all-encompassing curiosity—in his day only Pepys could have recorded that he "walked in the Parke, discoursing with

PEPYSIAN LIBRARY, MAGDALENE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

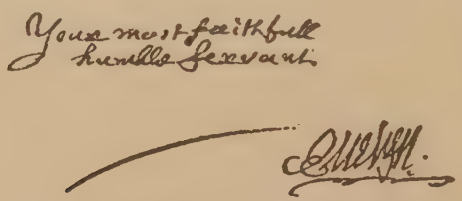
From the engraving by J. Saddler after the drawing by Lady Charlotte Neville

the keeper of the Pell Mell, who was sweeping of it; who told me of what the earth is mixed that do floor the Mall, and that over all there is cockle-shells powdered, and spread to keep it fast; which, however, in dry weather, turns to dust and deads the ball." Most of the books were such as deserved to be in the library of a well-read gentleman and citizen of the world, many were what have since come to be prized "collector's items" (his nine Caxtons would represent a fortune today), others (as his collection of eighteen hundred English ballads) formed remarkable special libraries in themselves whose assembling must have been a labor of scholarly love. Henry B. Wheatley, editor of the definitive edition of the diary, says of the collection in relation to its donor:

> What does the library tell us of the man? The answer comes quick. It tells us that he was a judicious collector. Although he was a true lover of books, and found it almost impossible to resist the pleasure of buying them, he early determined to keep his collections within reasonable bounds, and not to have more books than his cases would hold. At one time his delight was in a multitude of books, but his taste changed, and he made a practice of weeding out inferior volumes to make room for the better. Among the MSS. is a list headed "Deleta, 1700," which contains such notes as these: "Ejected as a duplicate," "To give way to the same reprinted," "To give way to a fairer edition."

The library is transported to Magdalene and more or less forgotten. Twenty-five years go by, and one Peter Leicester stumbles on the very threshold of discovery, begs pardon, and withdraws into the darkness out of which he emerged for a single luminous instant. In 1728 Leicester, exploring the Pepys collection, came upon six manuscript volumes written in a cipher that aroused his

curiosity. But he was afraid he might make himself a nuisance to the librarian, and nothing came of the matter. The timid Mr. Leicester is gathered to his fathers; Frederick the Great founds the German Army; Britain and France, then Britain and the Colonies, battle for America; the sun of the Bourbons sets and Napoleon's rises; Nelson wins and dies off Trafalgar; Blücher comes up in the nick of time at Waterloo.



Signature of John Evelyn, from a letter to Samuel Pepys

Three years after the last event the diary of John Evelyn was given to the world. It had rested in his library at Wotton since his death; its existence was known, and it presented no mystery, for it was written in legible longhand in two volumes, one a quarto of some seven hundred pages, the other a smaller book which was not filled. Yet in this space Evelyn had encompassed the period from 1641 to 1706, to within three weeks of his death—a period which embraced virtually the whole lifetime of Samuel Pepys. Evelyn mentioned Pepys repeatedly, but to most contemporary readers the latter's name meant nothing amid the host of superficially greater personages who crowded Evelyn's grave pages.

But in the mind of one scholar this frequent recurrence of the name of Pepys awakened a healthy inquisi-

tiveness. He was George Grenville, master of Magdalene College, whose academic domain included the Pepysian Library. Grenville, aware of the existence of the six volumes filled with the queer cipher characters, decided that they might be worth more serious and thorough attention than had yet been bestowed upon them.

Enter now the hero. Grenville invited a Magdalene undergraduate named John Smith to look into the matter. The outlook was not encouraging. An expert stenographer declared that neither Smith "nor any other man" would ever be able to translate the ordered confusion of hen-tracks, with an occasional word islanded in longhand, that filled the volumes. But Smith went to work. The job took him three years—"usually twelve and fourteen hours a day, with frequent wakeful nights," he recorded. The marvel is, not that the wakeful nights were frequent, but that, under the scourge of so stupendous a task, Smith was able to spend any other kind of night. He seems to have suffered no permanent ill effects, for he survived his graduation from Cambridge half a century.

The shorthand in the diary was not a mysterious invention of Pepys's own, but a system that had been described in 1645 in Thomas Shelton's *Tachy-graphy*, then heralded as "the most exact and compendious methode of short and swift writing that hath ever yet been published by any." Tachygraphy (fast writing) is in fact a more precise definition of shorthand than the now universal stenography (narrow writing), and the vanished brachygraphy (short writing) is perhaps most precise of all. Shelton was one of several exponents of the art who had borrowed largely from Peter Bales, who endeavored to teach the students at his Elizabethan business college to "write as

fast as a man speaketh." His system was cumbersome and demanded such prodigies of memory from its practitioners that Bales's pupils might almost better have abandoned it in favor of learning a speech by heart as it was given. Some form of shorthand had probably been devised almost coincidentally with the birth of writing, but it remained for Bales and his contemporaries, despite the inadequacies of their elaborate mechanisms, to guide the art into the path out of which have been developed the exact systems of today.

The diary as transcribed by Smith was turned over to George Grenville's brother, Lord Braybrooke, who edited it and supplied copious notes. It was published in 1825 in two quarto volumes as *Memoirs of Samuel Pepys, Esq., F.R.S., Secretary to the Admiralty in the Reigns of Charles II and James II, Comprising his Diary from 1659 to 1669 . . . and a Selection from His Private Correspondence.* Credit was given "the Rev. John Smith, A.B.," as he had now become (though Heaven knows when he managed to do his studying), on the title page, but the type in which his name is set is a third the size of that assigned to Lord Braybrooke's. His lordship, moreover, is slightly patronizing, to put it at its mildest, in his allusion to Smith in his preface: "In justice to the Reverend John Smith (with whom I am not personally acquainted), it may be added, that he appears to have performed the task allotted to him, of deciphering the shorthand Diary, with diligence and fidelity, and to have spared neither time nor trouble in the undertaking."

But the noble lord is no less patronizing toward Samuel Pepys himself. "In justice to Mr. Pepys's literary reputation," he declares (the Braybrookeian bent toward justice

seems to have been strong), "the reader is forewarned that he is not to expect to find in the Diary, accuracy of style or finished composition. He should rather consider

MEMOIRS

OF

SAMUEL PEPYS, ESQ. F.R.S.

SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY

IN THE REIGNS OF CHARLES II. AND JAMES II.

COMPRISING

HIS DIARY

FROM 1659 TO 1669,

DECIPHERED BY THE REV. JOHN SMITH, A.B. OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

FROM THE ORIGINAL SHORT-HAND MS. IN THE PEPYSIAN LIBRARY.

AND A SELECTION FROM HIS

PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE.

EDITED BY

RICHARD, LORD BRAYBROOKE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

MDCCCXXV.

Pepys had been dead almost a century and a quarter before his Diary *saw print*

the Work as a collection of reminiscences, hastily thrown together at the end of each succeeding day, for the exclusive perusal of the Author."

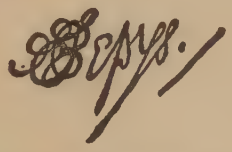
It would be interesting to hear the views of Mr. Pepys

himself if he could read this gratuitous apology for his meticulous endeavors. His indignation would probably reach its climax at the statement that his diary was "hastily thrown together at the end of each succeeding day," every element in which assertion is wholly unwarrantable. The diary was not thrown together; it was not a hasty job; the entries were not made day by day, but often after intervals of several days when Pepys found time and opportunity to transcribe his notes with the care and pains upon which a person of his old-maidishly methodical temperament would insist.

Whether the "collection of reminiscences" was intended "for the exclusive perusal of the Author" is a debatable question. Most authorities believe it was. The most brilliant exponent of the opposite theory is Robert Louis Stevenson in his essay on Pepys in *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*. The chief arguments in Stevenson's case are, first, that the diary was not destroyed, and, second, that Pepys "took unusual precautions to confound the cipher in 'rogueish' passages," which "proves, beyond question, that he was thinking of some other reader besides himself. . . . There is perhaps no other instance so remarkable of the desire of man for publicity and an enduring name. The greatness of his life was open, yet he longed to communicate its smallness also; and, while contemporaries bowed before him, he must buttonhole posterity with the news that his periwig was once alive with nits."

It seems, however, wholly logical to infer that Pepys did not destroy his diary for the very reason that so many of us, departing, leave behind us souvenirs of our earthly days that we should insist on doing away with if we could

be forewarned of the exact instant of our demise. And as for the confusion of the "rogueish" passages (which Mr. Smith none the less mastered, though they must have brought a blush to his clerical cheeks), why, if Pepys hoped that the diary would one day be made public, did he employ shorthand at all? The Stevenson brief is based wholly on the assumption that Pepys had a wonderful sense of subjective humor; had he been so equipped he would never have written his diary. As Richard Garnett comments in his introduction to the Everyman's Library edition of the diary: "Here and here only [in Pepys and Boswell] men whose considerable intellectual endow-



ments included a lively perception of the humorous lose all sense of humor when their own deportment is in question, and continually represent themselves in an absurd light with an unconsciousness more diverting than the most sparkling wit or the most refined satire."

It was remarked earlier in this paper that his plan for the future of his diary was one of two questions which Pepys does not answer. The other is how he pronounced his name. It is most probable that he called himself Peeps. That pronunciation was adopted by J. B. Fagan in his pleasant comedy *And So to Bed* which in 1927 introduced Broadway to the private life of Samuel Pepys just after the close of the diary, with delightful fidelity to the characters of the hero and the heroine as they are limned by Pepys himself. Not the least enjoyable element in the

play was the rendition by Mistress Knight of Pepys's own musical setting of *Beauty, Retire,* Mr. Pepys accompanying her effectively on the flageolet.

V

The first (1825) edition of the *Memoirs* is a relatively scarce book—probably only a small edition was printed. The Kern copy, not in the best of condition, but accompanied by an autograph letter of Pepys and another from Evelyn to Pepys, sold for $2000 in January, 1929. In 1828 appeared the second edition, in five volumes set in large, clear type—a piece of printing, which, once he had recovered from his probable shock, would have made the author mightily proud. An enlarged edition was published in 1848–'49, and the Mynors Bright edition of 1875–'79, presenting a freshly deciphered version, added a third to the body of material already made public.

Pepys made his American début from the enlarged Braybrooke edition in 1855—the year that saw the publication of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*—when the prosperous house of J. B. Lippincott & Co. of Philadelphia published the *Diary and Correspondence* in four volumes. This first American edition would be of more romantic interest if it contained a special introduction or manifested some other suggestion, however tenuous, of New World sponsorship. It is simply the latest available London edition set up in America and bearing an American imprint at the foot of the title page. The four volumes are impressive, almost stately, in appearance; the somewhat chilling format would have been almost too severe for,

say, Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets*. This fact, and the fact that thirty years elapsed between the publication of the original London and the original Philadelphia editions, are added proof that the diary was at first regarded mainly as an historical source book—a source book which unfortunately contained many irrelevancies and flippancies which could only distress the serious scholar, and what price scholars if they be not serious? This was Lord Braybrooke's own attitude toward Pepys, and he obviously reflected the spirit of his generation. It required the slow absorption of the years to reveal to the world that in Pepys's *Memoirs* it possessed a magnificent edifice of human documentation.

The multi-volumed edition of Pepys edited by H. B. Wheatley which appeared from 1892 to 1899 excels all others in completeness and will continue to hold its place as the standard text of the diary. In it are transcribed all but some thirty pages of the six manuscript volumes—which thirty pages will doubtless continue to be regarded in perpetuity as a *sauce trop piquante* to the Pepysian feast of self-revelation.

EDWARD FITZGERALD AND THE *RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM*

I

NEITHER in England nor in America, in 1858, was there any watch-dog periodical or society to protect the interests of authors and to commend such publications as reported promptly on manuscripts. Perhaps no publication reported promptly on manuscripts. *Fraser's Magazine*, at any rate, did not—either that or the filing system of *Fraser's* went lamentably askew, and Edward FitzGerald was a more than ordinarily unfortunate victim of tangled editorial red tape.

In January of the year that was to witness the Lincoln-Douglas debates and the collapse of the Indian mutiny FitzGerald had sent to *Fraser's* the manuscript of a rather free translation of a Persian poem on which he had been working off and on for several years. Eighteen fifty-eight drew to a close, and FitzGerald, a more than usually gentle and patient soul, was moved to ask the editors of *Fraser's* what the trouble was. The trouble seemed to be that the manuscript was not acceptable. Possibly *Fraser's* held *Persicos apparatus* in Horatian detestation; possibly a review of a book of Persian travels which the magazine had published many years before (the review had been written by William M. Thackeray) had usurped *Fraser's*

allotment of space for Persian arts, letters, modes, manners and customs for a generation.

Thackeray, it chanced, knew FitzGerald intimately, calling him, as the mood suggested, Ned, Neddibus, Neddikins, or Yedward. To others, Alfred Tennyson among them, Edward FitzGerald was inevitably Fitz. To his mother he had been Edward Purcell; his father, anticipating Lucy Stone by almost half a century and going her one better, had assumed his wife's name for himself and for eight other little Purcells in addition to Edward. Mary FitzGerald was a famous beauty, and Sir Thomas Lawrence painted two portraits of her—nobody seems to have troubled to paint her husband.

There is some evidence that *Fraser's* became encumbered with FitzGerald's manuscript several months earlier than January of 1858. FitzGerald himself, whose testimony can hardly be disregarded, declared later that the verses remained in the periodical's easy-going custody for two years. Either the time was so long that he merely guessed at it or else he was brazenly attempting to claim a record for retained manuscript; it now seems reasonably certain that *Fraser's* kept the manuscript just short of a full twelvemonth. At any rate, when FitzGerald at last requested its return, *Fraser's* unearthed it and sent it back with almost startling expedition considering the fact that it had languished in their offices certainly for more than eleven months, and perhaps for twenty-four.

By the middle of January, 1859, FitzGerald was tinkering with the verses again. He had decided to publish the translation at his own expense. The thing had been done before, is being done now, and will be done many, many times again, especially with verse. Acting with a

promptitude that would have put the staff of *Fraser's* to shame if they had known or cared about it, he was able to have printed copies in his hands by February 15th. His book was a brown-wrappered quarto pamphlet whereof the wrapper formed the title-page: *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám, The Astronomer Poet of Persia. Translated into English Verse.*

FitzGerald's name did not appear on the title-page. But another name did in addition to Omar Khayyám's—that of Bernard Quaritch, Castle Street, Leicester Square, who allowed himself to be regarded as the publisher. Quaritch had been born in Saxony forty years before, and was ten years younger than FitzGerald. He had lived and worked in London for fifteen years, first as an employee of Henry John Bohn, whose famous series of reprints, begun in 1846, was heading toward its thousandth title. Bohn had originally been a small second-hand bookseller, and Quaritch soon followed in his footsteps, opening a modest shop of his own that was to develop into the rare-book center of the world. Bohn lived to be eighty-eight and Quaritch to be eighty—second-hand bookselling was obviously a health-giving pursuit in those days—and before his death Quaritch could reflect on the story of the *Rubáiyát* and regret good-naturedly his inability to see the forest for the trees.

FitzGerald's print order for his translation—the printer was G. Norman of Maiden Lane, Covent Garden—was probably about two hundred and fifty copies. But why print any at all? The reason, in the case of FitzGerald, was certainly not empty vanity—the last characteristic that anyone could assign him. "When one has done one's best," he wrote soon after the appearance of

the translation, "one likes to make an end of the matter by print." And he added: "I suppose very few people have ever taken such pains in translation as I have," a

RUBÁIYÁT

OF

OMAR KHAYYÁM,

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA.

Translated into English Verse.

LONDON:
BERNARD QUARITCH,
CASTLE STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.
1859.

The title page of the original edition proclaimed the Rubáiyát *to be a translation*

statement that can still stand unchallenged. Getting the verses into type, then, would mark the end of the incident; this was the goal to which they had been destined from the beginning, and artistic completeness demanded that they attain it.

Mr. Quaritch, however, was willing to go through the motions of attempting to sell the book. The retail price (an utterly hypothetical figure) had originally been fixed at five shillings. It is safe to hazard the guess that no copy ever sold for that, certainly within the first few months following publication. FitzGerald kept the entire issue by him for a while, at last delivering to Quaritch as a present a package of two hundred copies.

The original quotation on the Quaritch exchange was nothing bid, half a crown asked. A continued lack of offers sent the price down to a shilling, and finally to a penny. Mr. Quaritch's was an humble and unpretentious establishment, but he had his pride, and he would not sell a book for less than a penny. At this figure the market steadied; a few customers actually pawed over the penny box outside the Quaritch door and proffered presumably honest coppers in exchange for *Rubáiyáts*. Why they did it will be explained when the world knows the reason why every stray book, like every stray dog, is certain of eventual ownership.

II

It was in 1846, when he was thirty-seven years old, that FitzGerald made the acquaintance of Edward Byles Cowell, then a youth of twenty. Cowell knew Latin, Sanskrit, Persian—accomplishments from which he derived enthusiastic pleasure, but which were of virtually no benefit to him as an assistant to his father, an Ipswich corn merchant. He became engaged to a lady some years his senior and devoted much of his pre-nuptial correspondence with her to instructing her in the mysteries of

Sanskrit. Following their marriage Mrs. Cowell decided to establish her husband at Oxford, greatly to the distress of FitzGerald, who had come to take such delight in the companionship of the Cowells that he could ill bear to see the little circle broken up. His objection to the idea, however, was not a product of his own sense of loss—his was too unselfish a nature to harbor any such petty opposition to a project that happened to interfere with his own mode of life—but the result of a sincere conviction that Cowell would not be benefited by the step. His arguments all but dissuaded Cowell, but luckily not quite. Had FitzGerald prevailed, there would never have been any FitzGerald *Rubáiyát.*

Five years later, to FitzGerald's dismay, Cowell accepted a professorship of history at the University of Calcutta. But in the interval he had made the great discovery—a manuscript of Omar in the Bodleian, the only one in England, the presence of which was as good as unknown until Cowell came upon it. He made a transcript of it and sent it to FitzGerald. The seed was sown.

The root took hold, the plant flourished—and what shall one call the flower? Was the FitzGerald version of the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* a translation, an adaptation, a paraphrase, or an original composition? "Translated into English verse," declared FitzGerald on the title-page of the first edition; "rendered into English verse," said the title-pages of the second, third and fourth editions. The alteration could hardly have been accidental; rather it was the result of FitzGerald's own well-considered opinion. Arthur Christopher Benson's study of FitzGerald offers this compact explanation:

FitzGerald happened to light upon an ancient poet, through whose writings, in spite of much tedious iteration and dreary moralising, much sensual imagery and commonplace Epicureanism, ran a vein of thought strangely familiar to his own temperament. . . . If FitzGerald had presented the world with an original poem of dreary scepticism and desperate philosophy, he would have found but few hearers. But the sad and wasted form of his philosophy came slowly forwards, dimly smiling, draped in this rich Oriental fabric, and with all the added mystery of venerable antiquity. It heightened the charm to readers, living in a season of outworn faith and restless dissatisfaction, to find that eight hundred years before, far across the centuries, in the dim and remote East, the same problems had pressed sadly on the mind of an ancient and accomplished sage. They did not realise to what an extent FitzGerald had concentrated the scattered rays into his burning-glass; nor how much of the poignant sadness, the rich beauty of the thought, had been overlaid upon the barer texture of the original writer by the far more sensitive and perceptive mind of the translator. It was as though FitzGerald had found some strict and solemn melody of a bygone age, and enriched it with new and honeyed harmonies, added melancholy cadences and sweet interludes of sorrow.

Such persons as actually bought copies of the brown-wrappered pamphlets in the penny box were doubtless influenced by sheer curiosity. *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* —what, pray, might that queer combination of syllables and accents mean? The cover, of course, made it plain that Omar Khayyám was "the astronomer-poet of Persia," but it gave no inkling of what rubáiyát was or were. Many otherwise well-informed persons still regard it as a title —Homer wrote the *Iliad*, Virgil wrote the *Æneid*, and Omar wrote the *Rubáiyát*. The word is merely the plural of rubai (quatrain)—"Verses by Omar Khayyám." Rubáiyát, as FitzGerald explained in his foreword, "are inde-

pendent Stanzas, consisting each of four Lines of equal, though varied, Prosody; sometimes *all* rhyming, but oftener (as here imitated) the third line a blank."

Omar Khayyám was probably a boy when William the Conqueror crossed the Channel and Harold fell at Hastings. Omar's Persia was immeasurably more advanced culturally than William's England; the youth was well educated and became one of the great mathematicians of his age. Mathematics and literature are by no means irreconcilable quantities; modern times can exhibit as proof thereof the names of Lewis Carroll and Stephen Leacock. Omar may have been a tentmaker, which is what his surname meant, but the surname must not be taken too literally, any more than the surnames of Jeremy Taylor or Oliver Goldsmith. Saul of Tarsus, not Omar, is likely to have his name perpetuated as that of history's foremost practising tentmaker.

III

An agreeable story persists to explain the salvation of the FitzGerald *Rubáiyát* from the Quaritch penny box. Algernon Charles Swinburne and Gabriel Charles Dante Rossetti (who preferred to be known as Dante Gabriel Rossetti and has had his wish) were strolling past the Quaritch shop one day and stopped to inspect the penny box. Incuriously one of them picked up a copy of the *Rubáiyát* and began to glance through it. Incuriosity gave way to interest, interest to eagerness, eagerness to high enthusiasm. The discoverer showed his find to his colleague, who reciprocated the discoverer's emotions. FitzGerald and Omar became the talk of the town and lived happily ever after.

It would be pleasant if the rebirth of Omar had recurred in such pat fashion; it is pleasant anyway, because the story will never die. Truth, crushed to earth, will rise again, but half truths will rise earlier and fare farther. The actual discoverer of the *Rubáiyát*, so far as the title can be assigned to any individual, was probably Whitley Stokes. Stokes was a lawyer and a philologist—a combination infinitely more startling than that of poet and mathematician. Stokes reported his discovery to Rossetti, who was responsible for the introduction to Swinburne. They visited Quaritch's, then, already aware of the existence of the translation and perhaps having already read it, from which point the story proceeds accurately on the line of the myth.

Swinburne recounted the incident thirty-six years later in a letter to the late Clement Shorter: "We invested, I should think, in hardly less than sixpenny-worth apiece, and on returning to the stall next day for more found that we had sent up the market to the sinfully extravagant sum of twopence, an imposition which invoked from Rossetti a fervent and impressive remonstrance. Not so very long afterwards, if I mistake not, the price of a copy was thirty shillings."

Despite this bullish activity in the *Rubáiyát* market, a second edition was not issued until nine years later. Four more years passed before a third edition was published (1872), and in 1879 followed a fourth—the last to appear during FitzGerald's lifetime. The text of the fourth edition has been generally followed in the multitude of editions which have since appeared; several editions are available which contain the texts of the first and fourth editions or of all the first four editions. The first edition

RUBÁIYÁT

OF

OMAR KHAYYÁM,

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA,

Rendered into English Verse,

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
BERNARD QUARITCH,
PICCADILLY.
1868.

In the second edition "translated" gave way to "rendered"

contained only seventy-five quatrains, the second one hundred and ten, and the third and fourth one hundred and one each. The *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* as known to readers of today, therefore, is a third longer than the original FitzGerald paraphrase.

"It is the only edition worth having," declared Swinburne in the letter just quoted, referring, of course, to the

first edition, "as FitzGerald, like the ass of genius he was, cut out of later editions the crowning stanza which is the core or kernel of the whole."

Only two of the seventy-five stanzas in the first edition are altogether omitted in subsequent editions—XXXVII and XLV. Obviously Swinburne meant one of these, and as each holds more or less "the core or kernel of the whole" they may well both be quoted, permitting the reader to make his own choice:

XXXVII

Ah, fill the Cup:—what boots it to repeat
How Time is slipping underneath our Feet:
  Unborn TO-MORROW, and dead YESTERDAY,
Why fret about them if TO-DAY be sweet!

XLV

But leave the Wise to wrangle, and with me
The Quarrel of the Universe let be:
  And in some corner of the Hubbub coucht,
Make Game of that which makes as much of Thee.

The first of these two stanzas must not be confused with the famous "Come, fill the cup" quatrain (VII in all editions)—in the first edition Omar enjoys an extra cup.

The progress of the polishing process through four editions is worth tracing through the example of one stanza—one of the half-dozen best known quatrains in this best-known long poem in the English language—a statement made with a bow to Thomas Gray's *Elegy Wrote in a Country Church-Yard* in the absence of any accurate statistics:

First Edition

While the Rose blows along the River Brink,
With old Khayyám the Ruby Vintage drink:
And when the Angel with his darker Draught
Draws up to Thee—take that, and do not shrink.

Second Edition

So when at last the Angel of the drink
Of Darkness finds you by the river-brink,
And, proffering his Cup, invites your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff it—do not shrink.

Third Edition

(Identical with first and second save for substitution of *offering* for *proffering*.)

Fourth Edition

So when the Angel of the darker Drink
At last shall find you by the river-brink,
And, offering his Cup, invite your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff—you shall not shrink.

IV

The Boston house of J. R. Osgood & Co. published the "First American from the Third London Edition" in 1878 in the honest assurance that the title-page meant all that it said. Actually the *Rubáiyát* had appeared in America eight years earlier. To complicate the business further, the authentic first American edition was designated "Second Edition" on the title-page, which carried neither date nor place of publication.

RUBÁIYÁT

OF

OMAR KHAYYÁM,

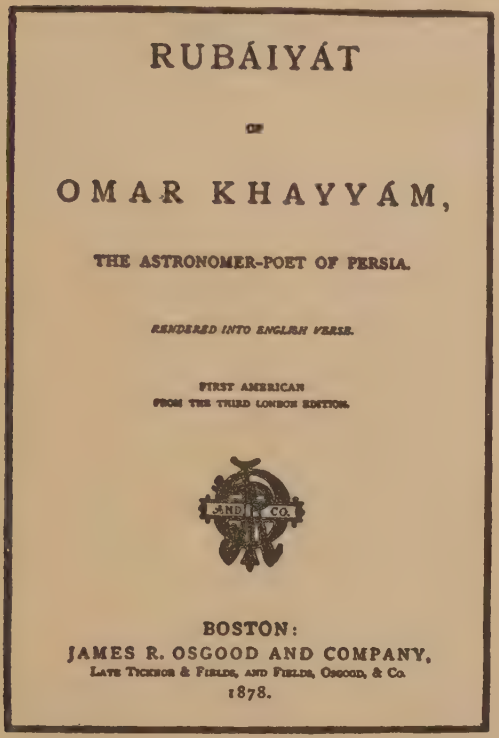
THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA.

Rendered into English Verse.

SECOND EDITION.

The authentic first American edition of the Rubáiyát *exhibited neither date nor place of publication. It was issued at Columbus, Ohio, in 1870*

The second English edition (1868) won the dignity of notice by the *North American Review*, which notice was read with interest by a little company of people in Columbus, Ohio. Colonel James Watson seems to have been the prime mover in the enterprise, and one or two other ex-Union officers assisted—Omar's fatalism was the perfect soldier philosophy. A New York bookseller was requested to supply copies of the book—proof that some reviews do sell books. He finally managed to secure one copy, and explained the trouble he had been put to to get that. It was passed about in the little circle of Columbus



RUBÁIYÁT

OF

OMAR KHAYYÁM,

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA.

RENDERED INTO ENGLISH VERSE.

FIRST AMERICAN
FROM THE THIRD LONDON EDITION.

BOSTON:
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY,
LATE TICKNOR & FIELDS, AND FIELDS, OSGOOD, & CO.
1878.

The first Boston Rubáiyát, *which the publishers in good faith called the "first American edition," appeared eight years after the privately printed Columbus issue*

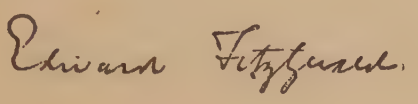
admirers, who finally decided to print a few copies to supply their own wants. About a hundred copies of this well-intentioned piracy seem to have been made, and it is now rather scarcer than the first English edition. A copy sold at the Anderson Galleries in New York in 1928 for $230; the identical copy of the London 1868 edition which was used for the Columbus reprint of 1870 brought $380 at the same sale.

Heading the list of the multitudinous editions of the *Rubáiyát*, the cynosure of the *Rubáiyát* collector's eye, is of course the first English edition. It is not a rare book *in excelsis;* indeed, considering its dubious early days and the fragility of its format it has survived remarkably well —a result, undoubtedly, of the timely and hearty enthusiasm of Swinburne and Rossetti. But as far, far more collectors want copies than can ever hope to be supplied, the price is formidable. The Kern copy, in the original wrappers and in well-nigh pristine condition, sold for $8000 in 1929. This is a sensational advance, the 1859 *Rubáiyát* having in recent years hovered between $1000 and $2000 with remarkable steadiness considering the ups and downs (particularly the ups) of the rare-book market. The second (1868) edition sells into the hundreds; the third and fourth are readily obtainable at $25 and under.

In the collecting field the *Rubáiyát* occupies a place somewhat similar to that held by Walton's *Compleat Angler*. Collectors of the *Rubáiyát* are collectors of a book and not of an author. A fine collection of *Rubáiyáts* would now be the task of a lifetime and would require a considerable outlay of money, though it would not be so difficult nor so costly an enterprise as a collection of *Anglers*. The most notable *Rubáiyát* collection ever assembled, that of William V. Wheeler, was dispersed at auction at the Walpole Galleries in New York in 1919. The first edition sold for the then sensational figure of $910, at a time when the 1859 *Rubáiyát* was being generally quoted at around two or three hundred dollars.

The *Rubáiyát* has been a printer's delicate plaything almost since the dawn of its fame, and particularly in the twentieth century. A census of private press *Rubáiyáts*

would be virtually a census of private presses. Among books published in the latter half of the nineteenth century, none has attracted a greater abundance or a greater variety of illustrators.



The brevity of the *Rubáiyát* has likewise endeared it to makers (and therefore to collectors) of miniature books. The very smallest book in the world, in fact, is a *Rubáiyát* which was published by Charles Hardy Meigs of Cleveland in 1900. The pages measure five-sixteenth of an inch square; opened out flat, the book cannot cover the average adult male thumbnail. There are three quatrains to a page, and it is not well to attempt to read them with the unaided eye. This tiniest of books loses some of its romantic interest from the fact that it was not printed from type, but from photo-engravings reproduced from a large model prepared for the purpose. Movable type of such infinitesimal dimensions will probably never be made, or, once made, will never be set. The smallest movable type—fly's-eye—is billboard Gothic by comparison with this sub-microscopic *Rubáiyát*. Fly's-eye type, which is reasonably legible, has been used in books whose well-proportioned pages measured around two by one and three-eighths inches—veritable elephant folios alongside the Meigs opusculissimum.

The most desirable *Rubáiyát* that ever existed (there appears to be no record of its fate) was that which FitzGerald sent to the Cowells in Calcutta. Cowell died in

1903, twenty years after FitzGerald, happy in the knowledge that the enthusiasm which he had been privileged to impart had contributed in no slight measure to the isolated perfections of an imperfect world.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AND HIS *AUTOBIOGRAPHY*

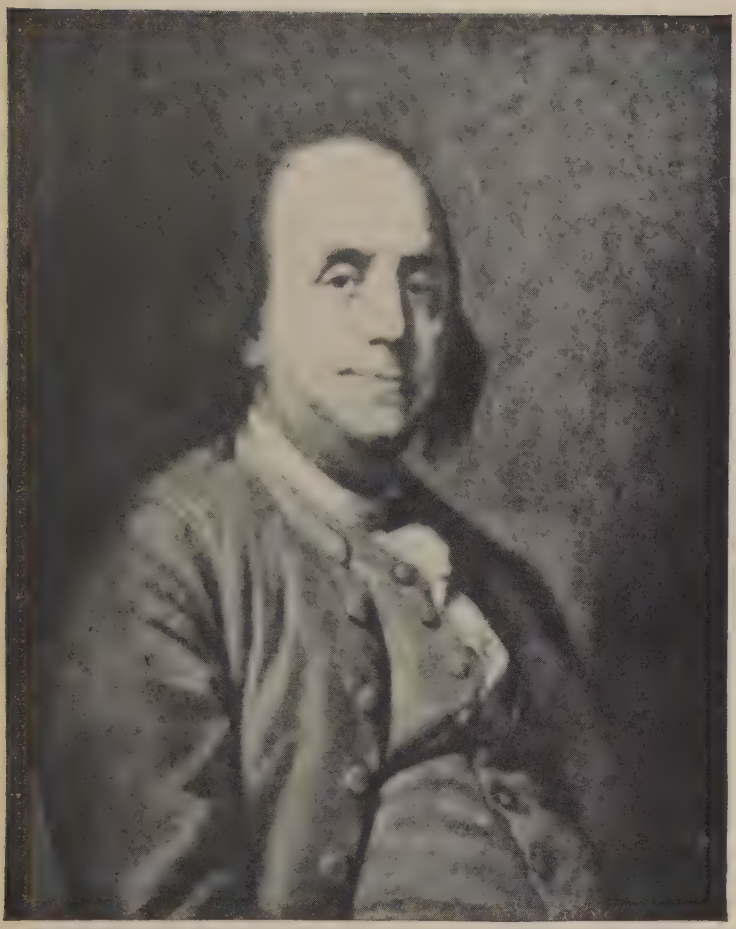
I

FRANKLIN? Ah, yes, the driver had heard of him. The gallant explorateur anglais, lost in the Arctic a matter of twenty years since. And this was his portrait—here in this cab? Ah, a distinguished-looking gentleman—a little too portly, a little too advanced in years, perhaps, to withstand the rigors of the polar seas, but—ah, another Franklin! Benjamin Franklin? No, the cocher had not heard of that one. This Franklin was an American? He had lived in Paris? But everyone lives in Paris sooner or later, particularly Americans. A fine portrait, however. Yes, a distinguished-looking gentleman. Merci bien, monsieur, et bon voyage à M. Franklin!

For the portrait of M. Franklin was about to go a journey. It was the property of John Bigelow, late United States Minister to France, who was buying it sight unseen. The portrait was a noble possession in itself, but about to accompany it on its journey—already accompanying it on the cab ride—was a collection of documents which were of even greater moment. These, too, Mr. Bigelow was buying sight unseen, and giving a quantity of francs therefor in a day when five francs approximated one dollar, for the year was 1867, and the star of the third Napoleon rode high.

It was unfortunate that Mr. Bigelow could not have been on the spot when the portrait and the collection of manuscripts were brought to light, for the bringing was the result of his own intelligent curiosity and his long devotion to the career of his eminent predecessor. During the preceding summer he had attended a dinner at which one of the guests was Professor Edouard Laboulaye, who had recently translated and published a selection from Franklin's correspondence—a work which obviously had not yet come to the notice of the cocher. Bigelow asked the dinner guests in general, and M. Laboulaye in particular, "if they had ever heard, or if they had any reason to suspect, that the original manuscript of Franklin's autobiography was in France." The guests were men of letters or of affairs—the sort who, particularly in France, would be able to give him the information he sought if anyone could—but they had no information to give.

Bigelow had several reasons, he explained, for believing that the manuscript was in France if it existed at all. Some of these reasons were based on historical data which will be presented in due course. Another was the fact that Bigelow "had received the impression some years previous from Henry Stevens, a professional book-collector in London, that he had seen the manuscript in the hands of a gentleman residing in France, and had only been discouraged from buying it by the price." Henry Stevens of Vermont, one of the most remarkable and enterprising figures in the history of bibliography, may or may not have disclosed the price to Bigelow. He disclosed it to the world subsequently, at all events. He had seen the manuscript of Franklin's *Autobiography* at Amiens, in the possession of a private family, and had offered £200 for it.



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, FROM THE PASTEL BY DUPLESSIS

This portrait (which the cab driver mistook for Sir John Franklin) was acquired by John Bigelow with the manuscript of the Autobiography. *It is now in the New York Public Library*

The owners wanted £600. The portrait and the collection of letters which accompanied it were not in the market. Neither, so far as Henry Stevens was concerned, was the manuscript of the *Autobiography*—not at £600.

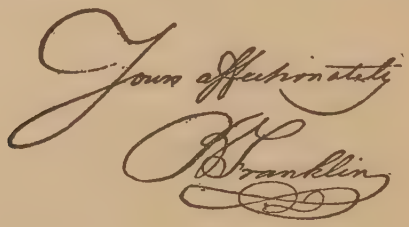
John Bigelow set out for America by way of London with his curiosity still unsatisfied. But Professor Laboulaye had not forgotten. Bigelow had recalled that he had heard Amiens mentioned somewhere in connection with the manuscript; Professor Laboulaye had a friend in Amiens who would know if the manuscript were anywhere about. Bigelow had barely reached London when he received a note from Laboulaye which opened with a triumphant "Eureka!"

Yes, the manuscript existed. It was in Paris, the property of Paul de Senarmont, late of Amiens, who now lived in the exclusive St. Germain quarter of the capital. M. de Senarmont owned not only the manuscript but a fine pastel portrait of Franklin by J. S. Duplessis and "a considerable collection" of letters "in an unbroken series." For the lot—portrait, manuscript and letters—M. de Senarmont wanted 25,000 francs.

II

Bigelow was unable to return to Paris to inspect the trove and consummate the deal. He had at his command, however, the services of a competent representative—William H. Huntington, Paris correspondent of the New York *Tribune*. Huntington was a man of means and culture, an enthusiastic delver among old books and prints, and a familiar figure to the bouquinistes along the Seine (who in those days really had one or two good books,

not a depressing assortment of dog-eared school texts). Three years later, when the siege of Paris opened, Huntington would remain in the beleaguered capital and devote much of his time and funds to the relief of the general distress. Following Huntington's death in 1885 the mayor of Montmartre described how the American used to come to him "with his hands full of gold and bank-notes," and "the sole condition of his gifts was that his name should be kept absolutely secret." Did they speak French or English at these confidential conferences? Each



must have been thoroughly, almost equally at home in either. For the mayor of Montmartre had only recently returned from four years of teaching at a school for young ladies in Stamford, Connecticut. His name was (and still is) Georges Clemenceau.

Huntington reported to his principal in a series of sprightly communications that do not hide the zeal and diligence with which he prosecuted his mission. Bigelow had written: "I can hardly suppose $5000 would be well invested in that quarter, but I think ten or fifteen thousand francs might be." De Senarmont, Huntington advised, was "ready but not eager to sell (if he knows himself) at 25,000 francs," and "intimates that he shall run the risk of waiting for or provoking the chance of that

price being given." Obviously it was a seller's market, and Bigelow authorized Huntington to use his own judgment. Huntington forthwith acquired the three parcels for 25,000 francs, took them to a packer's (the occasion which gave rise to the cocher's confusion over the two Franklins), and the Franklinicnacs (Huntington's phrase) were duly dispatched to London.

They reached Bigelow's hands on January 28, 1867. That evening he dined with John Forster and Wilkie Collins. They were enthusiastic, especially Forster, who was a bit of a dilettante in that line himself. Bigelow's opinion of his purchase seems to have undergone an immediate and natural change once the treasures were in his hands. Two weeks before this he could "hardly suppose" such a sum as he had paid could be "well invested in that quarter"; now he wrote Huntington: "No one could as yet repurchase the collection for what I paid." That "yet" still holds good—and grows better every day. The manuscript of Franklin's *Autobiography* is now safely sheltered in the Huntington Library at San Bernardino, the property of the people of California, far from the madding crowd of collectors forever. Were there any means of getting it into the market, how much would it bring? The bidding might start as low as a quarter of a million dollars, perhaps at a half, and it would rise to—?

Now, however, the manuscript was safe in John Bigelow's hands, and on his return to America he began an intensive study of it. In the months that followed he maintained an interesting bibliographical correspondence with Huntington, who urged him to publish it with explanations and comments. This Bigelow finally did in 1868. Franklin had been dead more than three-quarters of a

century before a complete and definitive edition of his *Autobiography* was given to the world.

III

It was in 1771, while he was stopping at Twyford, England, as the guest of the Reverend Jonathan Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph, that Benjamin Franklin began his *Autobiography*. The bishop's family numbered a son and four daughters, handsome children of handsome mother. Franklin's intimacy with the Shipleys had begun in 1759, when Georgianna, the youngest daughter, was three years old, and Anna Maria, the eldest, eleven. The Bishop's sympathy with the Colonies probably cost him Canterbury; Georgianna's devotion to the kindly American might have caused equal annoyance to herself and to Franklin had it leaked out that she contrived to smuggle at least one letter to him a few months before Bennington and Saratoga, which is given entire in James Madison Stiffler's recent presentation of their correspondence. She found therein space to discuss literature:

> Pray have you met with Smith's "Wealth of Nations"? If not, I venture strongly to recommend it to you. I have read only parts, but propose shortly to read it regularly through. His sentiments are liberal and the language clear and interesting. This is the only book that has been published lately worth mentioning, except Gibbon's "History of the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire." It is written in a pleasing, elegant manner; his scheme is to unite ancient and modern history, an immense work which I wish he may have application to accomplish.

Gibbon had the application and needed it; eleven years passed before the final volume of his history (the title of

which Georgianna did not quote altogether exactly) came from the press.

In the delightful leisure of Twyford Franklin composed more than a third of the *Autobiography*—a third, that is, of all he ever wrote, which is far from meaning that he covered in this portion a third of the story of his life. He reached a point just beyond the account of his marriage; then comes the following significant memorandum:

> Thus far was written with the intention expressed in the beginning and therefore contains several little family anecdotes of no importance to others. What follows was written many years after in compliance with the advice contained in these letters, and accordingly intended for the public. The affairs of the Revolution occasion'd the interruption.

Thirteen years, in fact, had elapsed since the Twyford days, and thirteen upstart colonies had become a nation before Franklin found leisure to continue. He was representing his country in Paris and living in Passy, home of smug latter-day elegance, bounded by the Étoile, the Bois de Boulogne, and the Seine, but then a suburb still unconfined by Vauban's encircling walls. The mayor of Passy was Louis le Veillard, and he became one of Franklin's dearest friends among a whole community of admirers. M. le Veillard, to whom Franklin either exhibited the manuscript or at least confided the fact of its existence, urged him to continue it, and to such good purpose that Franklin returned to his task with earnest intentions. He added only some five thousand words at the time, but they are among the most important in his story, including as

they do his famous table of virtues and his account of his program of self-discipline.

These two fragments (Twyford and Passy) made jointly slightly more than half of the *Autobiography* as the world knows it today. It was not until 1788, when Franklin had returned to America, that he made his most serious essay to conclude his account. In that year and the next he brought his life story down from 1730 to 1757—from his twenty-fourth to his fifty-first year. In 1790 he died.

By his will, all his papers became the property of his grandson, William Temple Franklin. Much obloquy has been cast on the memory of Temple Franklin; research may one day prove that he merited all of it; until actual proof of worse shortcomings is put forward one can only assert, but assert with full assurance, that he was criminally lazy. "Dost thou love life," his grandfather had said, "then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of." Temple Franklin, it is clear, heard different.

IV

Before his death Franklin had had copies of his *Autobiography* made for distribution among friends at home and abroad—perhaps as many as eight. One of these was dispatched to M. le Veillard in Passy.

Temple Franklin, actuated by what he probably intended to be studious thoroughness, published a long advertisement in Philadelphia calling on all and sundry to restore to him any documents to which he was entitled under his grandfather's will. He already possessed the original manuscript of the *Autobiography*. Forthwith he

went to London to prepare an edition of Franklin's papers —to discover that in March, 1791, there had been published in Paris the *Mémoires de la Vie Privée de Benjamin Franklin, écrits par lui-même . . . A Paris, chez Buisson, Libraire, rue Haute-feuille, no. 20.*

The whole history of publishing offers no stranger phenomenon than this. The first American classic originally saw the light of day neither in its own country nor in its own language. How it all came about is still something of a mystery and may forever remain one—there was considerable excitement in Paris at the moment. It seems certain that the translator who lent his services to Mr. Buisson of Highleaf Street did not have access to M. le Veillard's manuscript. The very identity of the translator is unknown. One thing is certain: he was as incompetent as he was anonymous. He contrived to get possession of only about a third of the complete account, and he mangled it admirably. He omitted what he chose —entire paragraphs occasionally (unable, perhaps, to gather their meaning, and just wise enough at moments to realize his limitations). The following year a German edition appeared in Berlin and a Swedish edition in Stockholm—and still no edition in English. One may anticipate and say that the comedy reached a climax of absurdity a few years later when a new French translation was made from the English translation from the original French translation from the manuscript as originally written in English. It will be recalled that Mark Twain's *Jumping Frog* was translated into French and then "clawed back into a civilized language once more by patient, unremunerated toil." The regallicized Franklin *Autobiography* went even *The Jumping Frog* one better.

MÉMOIRES

DE LA VIE PRIVÉE

DE BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,

ÉCRITS PAR LUI-MÊME,

ET ADRESSÉS A SON FILS;

Suivis d'un Précis historique de sa Vie politique, et de plusieurs Pièces, relatives à ce Père de la Liberté.

A PARIS,

Chez Buisson, Libraire, rue Haute-feuille, n°. 20.

1791.

Franklin's Autobiography *was first published not in America or England or even in English, but in a garbled French version*

Temple Franklin arrived in London in time to postpone two English translations of the 1791 Paris edition which were ready for publication. Two years passed; the heralded definitive edition of Temple Franklin failed to appear, and the English translations were issued. The first New York edition was published the following year (1794),

and before the end of the century editions were issued in such relatively far-flung localities in the States as Philadelphia, Boston, Danbury, Salem, Wilmington, Montpelier and Albany. The whole world seemed to be alive to the importance of Benjamin Franklin except his grandson.

Still Temple Franklin procrastinated. Among his minor troubles was the fact that the original manuscript of the *Autobiography* was heavily corrected, under and overscored, and poor printer's copy generally. He bethought him of the fair copy which his grandfather had sent to M. le Veillard. Would M. le Veillard exchange with him? Wise M. le Veillard would and did. The former mayor of Passy did not long survive the receipt of this precious souvenir of his departed friend. In 1794 he fell a victim of promiscuous Jacobin fury and perished on the guillotine. The manuscript passed to his daughter, who died in 1834, thence to her cousin, and finally to the cousin's grandson, Paul de Senarmont, who disposed of it to John Bigelow.

The fair copy which Temple Franklin received in exchange for the original did not happen to be so complete as the original manuscript. It is probable that Temple Franklin did not know this at the time, and that his suggestion for an exchange was entirely reasonable, sentiment aside. Yet he must have been singularly lacking in that occasionally desirable commodity to suggest the exchange. And even with the exchange once made, he did not bestir himself as greatly as might have been expected —or rather, he did not bestir himself, which was exactly what might have been expected. Not until 1817 did he finally issue his edition of his grandfather's papers, in-

cluding the autobiography—the most authoritative text yet available. It remained so for more than fifty years, until the appearance of the 1868 Bigelow edition.

The preface to the 1817 Temple Franklin edition is a remarkable document—quite as remarkable in its way as the *Autobiography* itself. It opens thus:

> An apology for presenting to the republic of letters the authentic memorials of Benjamin Franklin, illustrative of his life and times, written almost entirely with his own hands, would be at once superfluous and disrespectful. If any observation be at all requisite in the shape of explanations, it must be in answer to the inquiry, why such interesting documents have been so long withheld from public view? To this the editor has no hesitation in replying, that were he conscious of having neglected a solemn trust, by disobeying a positive injunction; or could he be convinced that the world has sustained any real injury by the delay of the publication, he certainly should take shame to himself for not having sooner committed to the press what at an earlier period would have been much more to his pecuniary advantage; but aware as he is, of the deference due to the general feeling of admiration for the illustrious dead, he is not less sensible that there are *times* and *seasons* when prudence imposes the restriction of silence in the gratification even of the most laudable curiosity. It was the lot of this distinguished character, above most men, to move, in the prominent parts of his active life, within a sphere agitated to no ordinary degree of heat by the inflammatory passions of political fury; and he had scarcely seated himself in the shade of repose from the turmoil of public employment, when another revolution burst forth with far more tremendous violence, during the progress of which his name was adduced by anarchists as a sanction for their practices, and his authority quoted by dreamy theorists in support of their visionary projects.
>
> Whether, therefore, the publication of his Memoirs and other papers, amidst such a scene of perturbation, would have been conducive to the desirable ends of peace, may be a matter of

question; but, at all events, the sober and inquisitive part of mankind can have no cause to regret the suspension of what might have suffered from the perverted talents of designing partisans and infuriated zealots.

This self-portrait of Temple Franklin standing as a bulwark between shuddering civilization and the fury of revolutionary France with his grandfather's memoirs clutched resolutely to his bosom is ridiculous to a degree that only Temple Franklin himself could have missed. But this was not his whole defense. It would have been impolitic to publish "these sketches, anecdotes and reflections" earlier owing to the risk of "awakening painful recollections or rekindling the dying embers of animosity." One might have thought that, as the embers had blazed afresh from 1812 to 1815, the cautious custodian of his grandfather's papers would have chosen to wait still another generation.

Even so, the manuscript could not be given to the world as it stood. It needed editing, and who among the sons of men was most qualified for the task? Temple Franklin's pseudo-pious fraud was not discovered for fifty years, when John Bigelow was moved to compare the holograph original with the Temple Franklin version of 1817. He found numerous fussy little differences, some silly, some grotesque, all irritating, all grossly officious—a total of more than twelve hundred. "Great guzzlers of beer" had become "great drinkers of beer"; "footed it to London" must be "walked to London"; "stared like a pig poisoned" was unvulgarized into "stared with astonishment"; a "conversation about books and authors" was jargonned into "a conversation relative to books and authors"; "as he sometimes did of an evening" was ex-

panded into "as he was accustomed to do after the business of the day was over"; "got a naughty girl with child" was Bowdlerized into "had an intrigue with a girl of bad character." It is possible that Temple Franklin did not make all of these changes; it is incredible that he did not make most of them.

The first edition of any book, in theory, is likely to be the poorest text. This is truer of Franklin's *Autobiography*, obviously, than of any other book ever published. This fact, and the weightier fact that the Paris edition of 1791 is not excessively rare, have kept its price lower than the fame of the *Autobiography* itself would merit—the last auction quotations, according to *American Book-Prices Current*, were $62.50 in 1925 and in 1928 alike. One can pay much more than that for certain titles which bear the name of B. Franklin on the title-page not as author, but as printer and publisher.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY AND *VANITY FAIR*

I

THE term news butcher is an Americanism of fairly recent coinage and highly specialized signification. It applies not to any casual vender of books and periodicals, but to him who hawks those wares on common carriers, particularly railway trains, to the invariable and pardonable distress of napping passengers. News butchers, despite the sudden and strident prominence they win as soon as they enter a coach, generally lapse into a desirable oblivion with their departure from it. Freakish fame has passed them by—all of them but Thomas Alva Edison. Newsboys—ah, newsboys are another story; newsboys are (or once were) virtually certain to become millionaires. But news butchers—what does become of news butchers anyway?

What, specifically, ever became of the news butcher on a Boston-New York express who on November 16, 1852, marched through the cars announcing his availability as a dispenser, among other productions, of "Thackeray's works"? History—unquestionably accurate history—records of him only two facts: that he was rosy-cheeked, and that in one of the cars he sold to a male passenger (presumably at the list price of fifty cents) a copy of *A Shabby Genteel Story, and Other Tales* by this same Thackeray.

The book was bound in red cloth and carried on its back cover a list of titles in Appleton's Popular Library which were "now ready," like the asterisked dishes on a menu card; among these were five books by W. M. Thackeray, and still another Thackeray title was listed under the volumes which were "nearly ready."

Yet all of these half-dozen little red books really contained only journalistic culls—good railway reading (it was a day of "railway libraries") but nothing, one would assume, to arouse a news butcher to the pitch of high-pressure salesmanship. Obviously there was something behind this special mention—some more impressive claim to fame which this Thackeray might assert. He might have asserted it on the spot if he had cared to, for it was William Makepeace Thackeray himself, an arrival in Boston on the steamer *Canada* four days earlier for a lecture tour of America, who bought the little red book from the rosy-cheeked news butcher, who thereupon walked on into the next car and oblivion.

The little red book which accompanied Thackeray on his first journey through a New England autumn—a journey that found him more than half-way round the world from his birthplace in a suburb of Calcutta forty-one years before—could be only a sombre reminder of things that had been and of things that could never be. *A Shabby Genteel Story* had first appeared in several numbers of *Fraser's Magazine* in 1840, but "the tale was interrupted at a sad period of the writer's own life," he later explained in preparing it for English publication. That sad period began with the certainty that his bride of less than four years was mentally unsound and that there was no remedy for her condition. They had met in

Paris in 1836 while Thackeray was correspondent for the ill-starred *Constitutional* of London, the wreck of which shortly afterward carried with it most of the considerable fortune which had come to him with his majority.

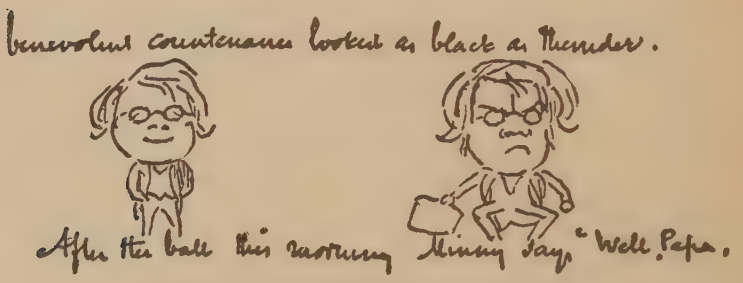
The memory of Thackeray's Paris days will live forever in *The Ballad of Bouillabaisse:*

> A street there is in Paris famous,
> For which no rhyme our language yields,
> Rue Neuve des Petits Champs its name is—
> The New Street of the Little Fields;
> And there's an inn, not rich and splendid,
> But still in comfortable case—
> The which in youth I oft attended,
> To eat a bowl of Bouillabaisse.

Even in Paris, whose Pont Neuf is the oldest bridge across the Seine, an occasional concession is made to modernity; the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs is now merely the Rue des Petit Champs. Terré's Tavern no longer exists, at number 16 or elsewhere, but bouillabaisse may still be had at a thousand other resorts, although in all strictness Marseille is the home of the "noble dish" which has disappointed whole armies of tourists attracted to it by Thackeray's recommendation. Only a single stanza in the famous ballad does not end on the bouillabaisse note:

> Ah me! how quick the days are flitting!
> I mind me of a time that's gone,
> When here I'd sit, as now I'm sitting,
> In this same place, but not alone.
> A fair young form was nestled near me,
> A dear, dear face looked fondly up,
> And sweetly spoke and smiled to cheer me.
> —There's no one now to share my cup.

A few months after the shadow of his wife's calamity first darkened and then deprived him of his home, *Punch* came into being. What with *Punch* and *Fraser's* and *Ainsworth's* and two or three other periodicals Thackeray had little difficulty in establishing a reputation as a successful journalist, but between successful journalism and fame stretches a long and arduous path, as many a successful journalist has learned. There was the obvious comparison with Dickens, one year Thackeray's junior, author, by



Self-caricatures of Thackeray in two moods

1846, of *Pickwick, Oliver Twist, Barnaby Rudge, The Old Curiosity Shop, Martin Chuzzlewit, The Chimes, The Cricket on the Hearth* and *A Christmas Carol* among others—already as certain of immortality as Shakespeare.

But Thackeray himself, in this same year of 1846, was quietly busy with something which he hoped might yet "take the great stupid public by the ears." He was working on a rather ambitious project—a full-length novel, in fact—for which he had thus far been able to devise no more engrossing title than *Pencil Sketches of English Society*. The manuscript was well under way before the

birth of the great inspiration that converted the projected title into a sub-title (with the words *Pen and* tacked on ahead of it). The inspiration was real; it arrived inconveniently when Thackeray was in bed; it fetched him out with a bound, and he "ran three times round my room, uttering as I went, 'Vanity Fair,' 'Vanity Fair,' 'Vanity Fair'!"

Everybody knows that a place called Vanity Fair is described in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, but everybody (with reservations) in this generation knows it because Thackeray named a novel after it:

> Then I saw in my Dream, that when they were got out of the Wilderness, they presently saw a Town before them, and the name of that Town is *Vanity;* and at the Town there is a *Fair* kept, called *Vanity-Fair*. . . . At *this Fair* are all such Merchandize sold, As Houses, Lands, Trades, Places, Honours, Preferments, Titles, Countreys, Kingdoms, Lusts, Pleasures and Delights of all sorts, as Whores, Bauds, Wives, Husbands, Children, Masters, Servants, Lives, Blood, Bodies, Souls, Silver, Gold, Pearls, precious Stones, and what not. And moreover, at this Fair there is at all times to be seen Juglings, Cheats, Games, Plays, Fools, Apes, Knaves, and Rogues, and that of all sorts. . . . And as in other fairs of less moment, there are the several Rows and Streets, under their proper names, where such and such Wares are vended: So here likewise, you have the proper Places, Rows, Streets, (*viz.* Countreys and Kingdoms), where the Wares of this Fair are soonest to be found: Here is the *Brittain* Row, the *French* Row, the *Italian* Row, the *Spanish* Row, the *German* Row, where several sorts of Vanities are to be sold.

What more ample synopsis could one ask for series upon series of "pen and pencil sketches" of any society?

II

Vanity Fair belongs to the noble company of books about which romantic stories of long and futile efforts to find a market have inevitably gathered. Sometimes the stories are true, as of course they should be, just as every great capitalist should be a poor boy grown up. *Vanity Fair,* unfortunately, is an exception. A fragment of the story was shown to Henry Colburn of the *New Monthly Magazine,* who rejected it, and that is the only shred of romance that can be made to adhere to the tale of the manuscript's adventures. Thereupon the first chapters were submitted to Bradbury and Evans, the proprietors of *Punch,* together with a few drawings, and Thackeray's suggestion that he be paid fifty guineas a part (including text and illustrations) was so readily acceded to that the author was "deuced sorry I didn't ask them for another tenner."

The book was to appear in parts—the inevitable "twenty in nineteen"—and the first number was issued in January, 1847. The wrappers were yellow—about the only color that was not definitely associated in the public mind with some other serial writer. Thackeray himself designed the cover in addition to writing and illustrating the story, but his design could hardly compare for effectiveness with that which the luckless Seymour had created for *Pickwick,* or with those which the tireless Cruikshank had produced for *Sketches by Boz* and *Oliver Twist.*

It may not have been the fault of the wrappers, but, for whatever reason, the early numbers of *Vanity Fair* failed to sell in anything like the degree that Bradbury and Evans had hoped for—and as the house some months

No. 1.] JANUARY. [Price 1*s.*

VANITY FAIR.

PEN AND PENCIL SKETCHES OF ENGLISH SOCIETY.

BY W. M. THACKERAY,

Author of "The Irish Sketch Book:" "Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo:" of "Jeames's Diary" and the "Snob Papers" in "Punch:" &c. &c.

LONDON
PUBLISHED AT THE PUNCH OFFICE, 85, FLEET STREET.
S. MENZIES, EDINBURGH; J. M'LEOD, GLASGOW; J. M'GLASHAN, DUBLIN.
1847.

[Bradbury & Evans, Printers, Whitefriars.]

WRAPPER OF PART I

Thackeray's original title, Pencil Sketches of English Society, *was incorporated into a sub-title*

earlier had concluded an eight-year contract with Charles Dickens and paid him a handsome advance, its hopes ran high. In fact, *Vanity Fair* began its serial career so inauspiciously that an early termination of the story was seriously considered. It was allowed to continue probably because Bradbury and Evans preferred to toss away a few hundred guineas rather than suffer the incalculable loss of prestige that must result from an open confession of failure.

And then *Vanity Fair* began to sell. *Pickwick*, it will be recalled, had manifested the same agreeable expansiveness a decade before, but the comparison, like most literary comparisons, is somewhat invidious. *Vanity Fair* was not another *Pickwick*. No Sam Weller made his appearance to take the reading public by storm—or rather to create a reading public where none had existed before. At the height of its success as a serial, according to Lewis Melville's life of Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* sold only about seven thousand copies a number—barely a sixth of the circulation which the final green-wrappered numbers of *Pickwick* had attained, but enough, one may be sure, to put heart in Messrs. Bradbury and Evans as well as in Mr. Thackeray. Its success convinced Harper & Brothers of the wisdom of bringing out an American edition in 1848 which was issued in two parts bound in green wrappers and which sold for fifty cents a part. The book was also made available in a single cloth-bound volume.

One obvious explanation of the success of the serial is that people liked it. Luckily this group included two admirers of sufficient importance to influence that "great stupid public" which, for all its intellectual shortcomings, is the supreme court of literary criticism. The *Edinburgh*

Review of January, 1848 (by which time twelve numbers of *Vanity Fair* had appeared), paid the serial a tribute that substantially registered in advance the verdict of posterity:

> In forming our general estimate of this writer, we wish to be understood as referring principally, if not exclusively, to "Vanity Fair" (a novel in monthly parts), though still unfinished; so immeasurably superior, in our opinion, is this to every other known production of his pen. The great charm of this work is its entire freedom from mannerism and affectation both in style and sentiment—the confiding frankness with which the reader is addressed—the thoroughbred carelessness with which the author permits the thoughts and feelings suggested by the situations to flow in their natural channel, as if conscious that nothing mean or unworthy, nothing requiring to be shaded, gilded, or dressed up in company attire, could fall from him. In a word, the book is the work of a gentleman, which is one great merit; and not the work of a fine (or would-be fine) gentleman, which is another. . . . His pathos (though not so deep as Mr. Dickens') is exquisite; the more so, perhaps, because he seems to struggle against it, and to be half ashamed of being caught in the melting mood; but the attempt to be caustic, satirical, ironical, or philosophical, on such occasions, is uniformly vain; and again and again have we found reason to admire how an originally fine and kind nature remains essentially free from worldliness, and, in the highest pride of intellect, pays homage to the heart.

Reviews in those days could make or break a reputation; the *Edinburgh's* in general were rather given to breaking. The notice of *Vanity Fair*—written by Thackeray's friend Abraham Hayward, who need not on this evidence be condemned as a log-roller—certainly was a factor of no mean importance in elevating the story's fortunes.

III

Less ponderable, but of infinitely more romantic interest, was the influence exercised by the long and enthusiastic dedication of the second edition of *Jane Eyre* early in 1848. The first edition had appeared the preceding fall, "edited by Currer Bell," and had been a remarkable success. No one seemed to know who Currer Bell was; some were convinced it was Thackeray himself. Currer Bell was the remarkable daughter—one of three remarkable daughters—of a Yorkshire minister whose tragedy it was to outlive his wife and all of his six children. Her name was Charlotte Brontë, but she managed to keep that fact a secret until 1849; in 1848 her real name did not greatly matter, for people were reading *Jane Eyre* and talking about it, and they read the laudatory dedication in the second edition:

> Conventionality is not morality. Self-righteousness is not religion. . . . The world may not like to see these ideas dissevered, for it has been accustomed to blend them; finding it convenient to make external show pass for sterling worth—to let whitewashed walls vouch for clean shrines. It may hate him who dares to scrutinise and expose—to raze the gilding, and shew base metal under it—to penetrate the sepulchre, and reveal charnel relics: But hate as it will, it is indebted to him. . . .
>
> There is a man in our own days whose words are not framed to tickle delicate ears; who, to my thinking, comes before the great ones of society much as the son of Imlah came before the throned kings of Judah and Israel; and who speaks truth as deep, with a power as prophet-like and as vital—a mien as dauntless and as daring. Is the satirist of *Vanity Fair* admired in high places? I cannot tell; but I think if some of those amongst whom he hurls the Greek-fire of his sarcasm, and over whom he flashes

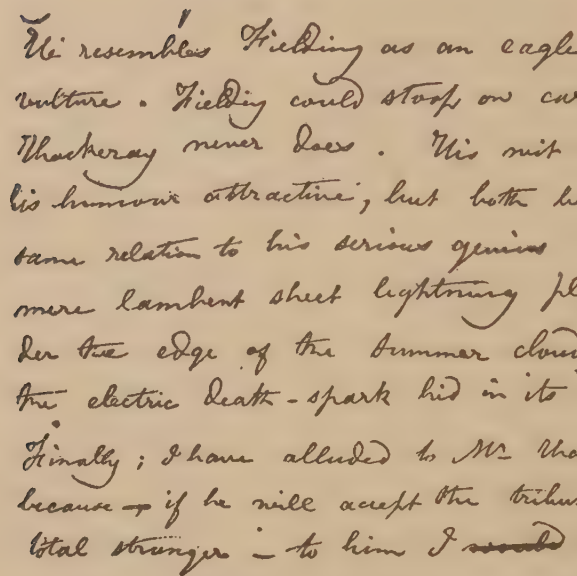
the levin-brand of his denunciation, were to take his warnings in time—they or their seed might yet escape a fatal Ramoth-Gilead.

Why have I alluded to this man? I have alluded to him, reader, because I think I see in him an intellect profounder and more unique than his contemporaries have yet recognised; because I regard him as the first social regenerator of the day—as the very master of that working corps who would restore to rectitude the warped system of things; because I think no commentator in his writings has yet found the comparison that suits him, the terms which rightly characterise his talent. They say he is like Fielding: they talk of his wit, humour, comic powers. He resembles Fielding, as an eagle does a vulture: Fielding could swoop on carrion, but Thackeray never does. His wit is bright, his humor attractive, but both bear the same relation to his serious genius that lambent steel lightning playing under the summer cloud does to the electric death-spark hid in its womb. Finally, I have alluded to Mr. Thackeray because to him—if he will accept the tribute of a total stranger—I have dedicated this second edition of *Jane Eyre*.

The dedication sent people to their dictionaries to learn what a levin-brand was, and to their Bibles to discover Ramoth-Gilead—and it set them to reading *Vanity Fair*.

Thackeray called the dedication "the greatest compliment I have ever received in my life," and soon thereafter, when *Vanity Fair* appeared in a single cloth-bound volume at the conclusion of its serial publication, a copy was addressed to the author of *Jane Eyre* "with the grateful regards of W. M. Thackeray." The two novelists did not meet until the end of 1849, when Currer Bell, her identity at last disclosed, came to London to be lionized, surviving the ordeal nobly, but happy to return to the desolation of her Yorkshire moors.

A letter to her father preceded her—a letter which,


He resembles Fielding as an eagle does a vulture. Fielding could stoop on carrion, but Thackeray never does. His wit is bright, his humour attractive; but both bear the same relation to his serious genius that the mere lambent sheet lightning playing under the edge of the summer cloud, does to the electric death-spark hid in its womb.
Finally; I have alluded to Mr Thackeray, because if he will accept the tribute of a total stranger — to him I would Dedicate

Portion of the dedication to Thackeray of the second edition of Jane Eyre, *in the handwriting of Charlotte Brontë*

lacking the references to Thackeray, any one of a thousand provincial misses might have sent home at the same time:

I must write another line to you to tell you how I am getting on. I have seen a great many things since I left home about which I hope to talk about to you at future tea-times at home. I have been to the theatre and seen Macready in "Macbeth." I have seen the pictures in the National Gallery. I have seen a beautiful exhibition of Turner's paintings, and yesterday I saw Mr. Thackeray. He dined here with some other gentlemen. He is a very tall man—above six feet high, with a peculiar face, not handsome, very ugly indeed, generally somewhat stern and satirical in expresson, but capable also of a kind look. He was not told who I was, he was not introduced to me, but I soon saw him looking at me through his spectacles; and when we all rose to go down to dinner he just stepped quietly up and said,

"Shake hands"; so I shook hands. He spoke very few words to me, but when he went away he shook hands again in a very kind way.

This description of the momentous occasion is carefully casual and objective; in detailing the same event to W. S. Williams, reader for Smith, Elder & Co. and her discoverer, Miss Brontë submits a rather more emotional picture:

When Mr. Thackeray was announced, and I saw him enter, looked up at his tall figure, heard his voice, the whole incident was truly dream-like. I was only certain it was true because I became miserably destitute of self-possession. Amour-propre suffers terribly under such circumstances: woe to him that thinks of himself in the presence of intellectual greatness! Had I not been obliged to speak, I could have managed well, but it behooved me to answer when addressed and the effort was torture—I spoke stupidly.

And to her dear friend Ellen Nussey she wrote the same day: "I felt sufficiently at ease with all except Thackeray, and with him I was painfully stupid."

The anticlimax was regrettable but inevitable; in the perspective of the eighty years that have intervened it is inconsequential. It is solely important to remember that the shy and tongue-tied little woman from the North was sufficiently eloquent in ink, and that no one was more prompt to detect the kinship of eloquence in *Vanity Fair*.

IV

The bibliography of *Vanity Fair*—and after *Pickwick*, *Vanity Fair* is the most valuable of the twenty-in-nineteen serials of the Victorian era—is rather less involved than

that of its famous forerunner. The confusion in *Pickwick* resulted largely from the double shift in illustrators; since Thackeray himself illustrated *Vanity Fair* to the satisfaction of himself and his publishers, the business presented no problem at the time and has left no vast heritage of technical difficulty to the collector. The collation of *Vanity Fair* in the definitive Van Duzer catalogue (1919) occupies nine pages, and any copy of the work in parts for which high collection prestige is asserted should be meticulously compared with this collation. If, however, the copy meets three simple tests it may fairly be described as an example of the earliest form of publication. These tests are:

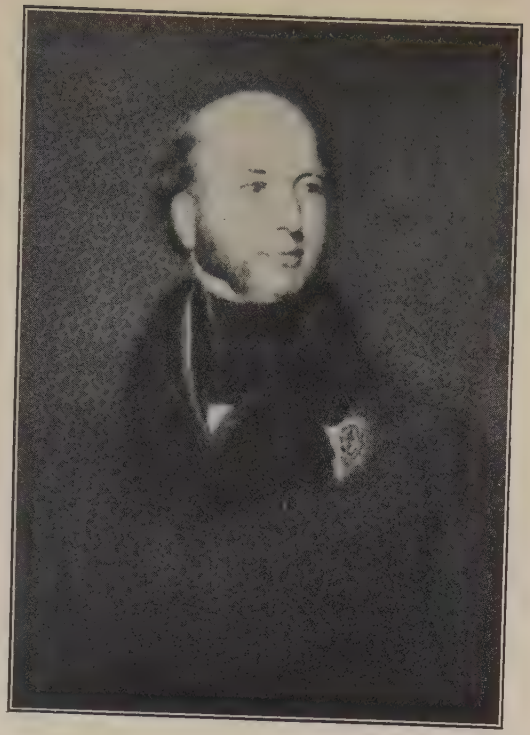
(1) The heading "Vanity Fair" on the first text page should be in rustic type.

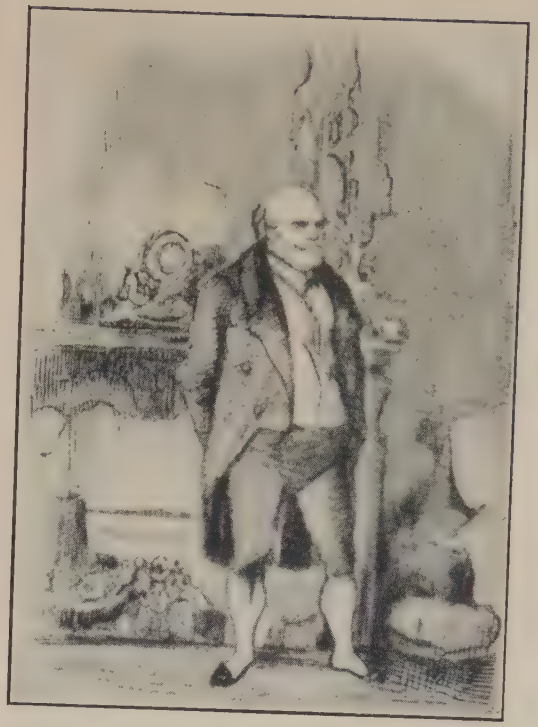
(2) There should be an illustration (Lord Steyne) on page 336.

(3) The phrase "Mr. Pitt" (later corrected to "Sir Pitt") should be employed on page 453, the nineteenth line from the bottom.

A sound copy in parts which bears these identifying marks of the first issue should be worth from $5000 up —the Kern copy sold for $7750 in 1929.

Points (1) and (3) as described above are obviously of little more than technical interest; Point (2) has more to recommend it. The portrait of Lord Steyne on page 336 was thought to resemble the third Marquis of Hertford a little too closely. Whether or not it actually did resemble him the reader may judge for himself by studying the accompanying illustrations; that it was meant to resemble him there can be little doubt. The *Dictionary of National Biography* says of Hertford that he "is best

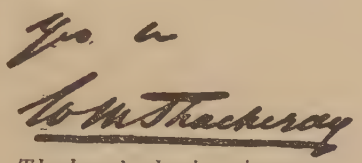




THE ORIGINAL AND THE COPY

The third Marquis of Hertford, after the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, and the drawing of Lord Steyne by Thackeray which was suppressed after its appearance in the first issue of Vanity Fair

remembered as the original of the Marquis of Steyne in Thackeray's 'Vanity Fair' and Lord Monmouth in Disraeli's 'Coningsby'." The D.N.B. would not make such an assertion on hearsay; moreover, although Sir Leslie Stephen had retired from the editorship of the D.N.B.



Thackeray's slanting signature

before the S volumes were reached, he still enjoyed a sufficiently close relationship with the publication to be able to emend references which he knew to be dubious or in error—and Sir Leslie Stephen was Thackeray's son-in-law. Lady Ritchie, Thackeray's older daughter, subsequently declared: "I suppose my father may have been told the picture was like Lord Hertford, and thought it best to suppress it; or perhaps the publishers advised him to do so. I remember hearing my elders talking about it, but I can't remember what they said."

Coningsby had appeared in 1844, two years after the Marquis of Hertford's death at the age of sixty-five. Thackeray reviewed *Coningsby* in no very flattering terms and later wrote a parody of it. "Everybody," he declared in his review, was reading *Coningsby* because "everybody recognises everybody's portrait." In selecting the Marquis of Hertford for his portrait of Lord Steyne Thackeray was probably influenced by the fact that Disraeli had used the same model.

Singularly little data on the whole affair is to be found in biographies and surveys of Thackeray and his work;

the most complete statement and analysis of the situation is contained in Charles Whibley's brief study. "The real Hertford," declares Mr. Whibley, "was a far more amazing creature than his literary portraits suggest. At first sight the conflicting testimonies seem irreconciliable. Says Greville: 'His life and death were equally disgusting and

Thackeray's later (vertical) signature

revolting to every good and moral feeling.' Says Croker: 'I never knew a man so fixed upon doing what he considered his duty.' Here are the extremes, each biased by personal and political prejudice. But Hertford's character will always remain unintelligible, until its progress and decay are both recognised."

That Thackeray used Hertford as a model for Steyne is certain, which makes it equally certain that the drawing on page 336 was intended as a likeness of Hertford. Whether the Marquis's friends objected and were able to make their objections effective, whether the publishers insisted on the suppression, or whether Thackeray himself came to believe that he had crossed the bounds of artistic license and perhaps of good taste—all this is still matter for debate. The undebatable fact remains that the picture was removed and the world's store of suppressed illustrations thereby increased by one.

But this is only half the mystery. Lord Steyne is represented in only two illustrations in the whole book, the suppressed portrait on page 336 (Part XI), and on page 421 (Part XIV), where he is shown at his rural

AN UNSUPPRESSED NOBLEMAN

Lord Steyne (left) is pictured in only two of Thackeray's drawings for Vanity Fair. *The other representation was withdrawn during publication*

after-dinner sport of "setting the boys' tutor, the Reverend Mr. Trail (now my Lord Bishop of Ealing), on her Ladyship's director, Father Mole, over their wine, and in pitting Oxford against St. Acheul. He cried 'Bravo, Latimer! Well said, Loyola!' alternately."

Why was not the illustration on page 421 suppressed

likewise? The fact that it was not may indicate that the suppression of the drawing on page 336 was the result of Thackeray's or his publishers' intervention, in the belief that the earlier illustration was a more approximate likeness. It seems logical to conclude that if the Marquis's admirers had objected, their objections would have been broad enough to extend to both of the Lord Steyne illustrations instead of concerning themselves only with the one. If little Anne Thackeray had only been old enough to recall the conversation to which she was privileged to be an auditor, or could have foreseen its subsequent bibliographic importance, the puzzle might readily be solved. But what fun is a puzzle once everyone knows the answer to it?

THE END